THE WAY OF THE SWAN

Poems of Kashmir

Presented by

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To

VIJAYA LAKSHMI PANDIT

Contents



The Way of the Swan

Poems of Kashmir

The Ka'ba and The Light of Somanath

O, Sarfi, as on every side a ray
Has fallen from His face to light the night,
Impossible it is for you to say
That Somanath has not the Ka'ba's light !

YAQUB SARFI KASHMIRI

Persian Diwan
Opening Ode

Kashmira Mandala

The Birth of the World from the Waters

The story of how Kashmir came to be renowned as the "land foremost in the world for ecstasy and Yoga" is told in the poems, scriptures, romances, memoirs and histories written by Kashmiris during the past sixteen hundred years. From these writings, there emerges an unbroken history of thought, along with a picture of life in vivid detail. According to Kashmir's commentary upon South India's *Natya Shastra*,[1] the universe is a Dance of creative desire and rapture in which experiences of consciousness, and not dogmas or doctrines are the liturgic reality, and life an aesthetic experience in all its moments. We read of delightful light wine cooled with ice and perfumed with flowers, exquisite theatrical performances, twelve storey palaces topped with crystal rooms and golden domes, theatres lighted with garlands of golden lotuses, banquets at which the Sultans of Kashmir served curry, cream and wine in tanks to ascetics from the plains of India and all the songs of Kashmira and the Kashya countries[2] were sung.

Kashmiris claim, in their histories, to have marched upon South India and the islands of the ocean in order to prohibit the slaughter of animals, in their scriptures, to have mastered the energy of the atom as an experience of consciousness.

[1] Bharata's *Natya Sutra* was commentated in the 11th century by Abhinava Gupta from the standpoint of the Kashmir Shaiva concept of the world as energy and the Dance as the ritual drama of its cyclic rebirth from the waters.

[2] Shrivara Pandit's *Jainatarangini* preserves the ancient use of the term *Kashya* for the regions of the lost northern sea, remembered in the *Zend Avesta* as Vourukasha.

Kings of Kashmira, J. C. Dutt, Calcutta, 1898, Vol. III.

They claim to have proved that women are four times more intelligent than men and ten times more receptive to the mysteries of the Bodhi-radiance which form the spiritual religion. What they say of themselves, legendary or historical, is their vision of the world and the human being, expressed not only in philosophical systems and scientific theories of music, poetics and the unconscious and transconscious minds, but also in a form of popular devotion and folk wisdom which makes their villages centres of humanistic achievement. Five hundred years ago, the patron saint of Kashmir organised a Muslim "Order of Rishis" to supervise social development on the principle that peace between neighbours and peoples begins with peace within individuals. Combining the delights of solitude with manual labour for the community, the disciples of Nuru'd-din, Nund Rishi, the Pir-e-Rishiyan,[3] found novel ways of impressing a vision of beauty as harmony upon the everyday pattern of folk life. The success of Kashmir with group as well as individual ecstasy is a unique chapter in the history of humanism.

Kashmiris themselves are hardly aware of their achievement. Institutions and festivals which strike the outsider as original and practical solutions of social questions they take for granted. While pilgrims walk over deserts and mountains to *Kashmira Mandala*,[4] they, in their own pilgrimages within Kashmir, have arranged things to enable "milk" relatives to enjoy boat outings together. There is a Hindu shrine by the tomb of a Muslim saint, or a mosque will have a shrine in the courtyard, so that a Muslim "milk father" can chaperon a boatload of laughing Brahman "milk" daughters to the joint sanctuary of Shah Hamadan and Shri Kali, or "milk" brothers and sisters pay their respects together to Sheikh Hamza Makhdum and Sharika Bhagavati when the almond blossoms

[3] Preceptor, "Elder" of Rishis, a Persian-Sanskrit compound, typical of the 14th-15th century spiritual movement in Kashmir.

[4] The Circle of Kashmir.

Mandala: liturgically, circle; geographically, zone, land.

and iris flowers bloom on the fortress of the "thirty million shining ones" over the capital. Singing in the face of disaster, hospitable, generous and beautiful, the Kashmiris in their mountain paradise solve, by their peculiar blend of laughter and reverence, what bigotry elsewhere complicates.

The pilgrims walking to Kashmir, participating in the ancient drama of uniting India in the places of pilgrimage, have a goal of their own in this image of sacred geography. The meaning of *Kashmira Mandala* to the story of Indian spirituality begins in what the seats of the four Jagat Gurus mean to the stream of pilgrims. The World Gurus of the east, west, north and south support the symbolic pillars of the directions, enclosing the *mandala* of visionary geography which is at once the unity of India and the liturgical ideogram of a concept recurring in all branches of the Aryan heritage. To close the circle with the bounding pillars is to have become the lord of the circle, to have drawn the *mandala* of integration of the vital and ideal. The *Chandogya Upanishad* outlines a meditation upon the universe of sound and perfumes radiating in four endless directions from an abode of songs and waters at the centre. The concept is subjected by Kashmir Shaivism to rational analysis in its philosophical renaissance of the eighth to the fourteenth century, a movement which accepted nothing from ancient tradition or liturgical symbolism which did not bear confirmation. The spiritual event prefigured by the image of *Kashmira Mandala* as the aura of eternity shining over the pilgrimage to the four directions came, in the Shaiva literature, to be analysed in a manner which draws a number of Indo-Iranian symbols to a coherent pattern. In the Puranic era, the image of itself as halo and sanctuary of eternity, guardian of the directions and birthplace of the world from the waters, is the theme of Kashmir's own creation myth: the poem inaugurating its literary history.[5]

[5] *Nilamata Puranam*, Sanskrit text, ed. by Jagaddhar Zadoo and Ramlal Kanjilal, Lahore, 1924.

This personal *puranam* places inner and outer circles of the mountain ranges of Kashmir in a protectorate of the Serpent of Eternity. In his cosmic form, Shesha Naga played a leading part in draining the lake which had filled the valley. As the son of the Rishi Kashyapa, Nila Naga, the Muni, he negotiated the expedition of the gods in the first battle to save Kashmir. The light of his seven hundred haloes shines from the Himalaya to the ocean, surrounding India in a circle of blue which lasts though the earth go down beneath the waters in the Nights of Brahma.

Cyclic genesis from the waters is associated, in the memory of the Aryans, with a holy land of dawns and origins left behind them, an ark of seeds and archetypes in a *central circle*[6] which had been the home of hymns and scene of ecstasies and revelations. The second birth of Zarathustra,[7] his spiritual nativity, takes place in his return to Airyanem Vaeja (Pahlavi Iran-Vej,)[8] the central *karshvar*, where he crosses the four branches of the sacred river Daiti and is clothed, from its waters, in the radiance which enables him to see and speak with the holy immortals. The accomplishment of his aeon is to be in the person of three saviours born of the light of his glory. The quaternity is depicted by the visionary geography which assigns seven saviours to the four directions in a figuration of the fundamental concept of the seven immortals as six and one. Two *karshvars* are placed to the north of the central circle, two to the south, and one each to the east and west. The six are presided over by guardians who will co-operate with the seventh, the promised Saoshyant, whose coming will accomplish the transfiguration of the earth. The division of the earth into twice six zones, to concord with the

[6] The Avestic *karshvar* (Latin *orbis*), equivalent of the Sanskrit *mandala*, zone ; Persian, *keshvar*, land.

[7] "When Zarathustra reached the age of thirty, there came upon him the desire for Iran-Vej, and he set out for it with a few companions, men and women." *Zarathust-Namah*, ed. by F. Rosenberg, St. Petersberg, 1914, pp. 22.

[8] Cradle, *seed* of the Aryans.

signs of the zodiac, announces the dyadic relationship of celestial doubles underlying creation as the union of heaven and earth.

The holy land of the Indo-Iranians, in which the ecstasies of Zarathustra, and of every soul at the dawn of its eternity take place, reappears in *Kashmira Mandala* in a reconstruction of its most ancient and sacred associations, the Spirit of God upon the Waters and the ark of seeds fastened to a mountain of the universe which is, at once, the universal ocean. The *central circle*, in which the seeds of restoration are guarded in the radiance of primeval waters by the Goddess Ardvi Sura Anahita, is transplanted to Kashmir complete with its three sacred peaks and battle for the immortals, the essences of all things on the earth transferred to the transfiguring radiance of the waters of the Vitasta, the Goddess in person. In the new "mandala containing all mandalas", the guardianship of the directions is conferred upon four Maha-Nagas, enthroned upon the holy mountains of the vale.[9]

In the eighth century, Shankaracharya, who completed his own pilgrimage in Kashmir, established the seats of the Jagat Gurus at the four corners of India. His grand concept of the drama of pilgrimage reflects the meaning which Kashmir gave to its mythic guardians of the directions. The Body of Vishnu, conceived as India, standing upon the lotus of the ocean, had long been invested with pilgrimages representing the lotus "circles" of the shining, *deva* body. The seventh circle, the golden lotus of a thousand petals to which Raja Yoga aspires, is represented on earth by the lake of the mind, the Manasarovara of Mount Kailasha, even as the seventh Saoshyant of the Iranians will be born of the golden radiance of the lake of salvation by knowledge. The sixth *chakra* upon

[9] The Dikpalas of Kashmir:
Guardian of the East, Bindusara Naga; of the South, Shrimadaka; of the North, Uttara Ganga (Gangabal Lake, Mount Haramukh); of the West, Ailapatra (Elapatur Lake, Mount Aparbat, above Gulmarg).
Nilamata Puranam, *op. cit.* Appendix, p. 4.

the Body of Vishnu is Hardwar, the point at which the Ganges emerges from the "brow of Shiva" and the Himalaya opens to the vision of the eternal snows. Hardwar is the *Nilamata Puranam's* point of departure for the rescue of *Kashmira Mandala* from the demoniac invasion, Benares of the road by which the gods must walk to Kashmir as the road to themselves.

As the realm of theophanies and regeneration from the waters, the situation of Airyanem Vaeja is determined in relation to each and every individual. Between the point that the sun rises on the longest day, wherever he may be, and where it rises on the shortest, is the eastern *karshvar*, Savahi, from which he situates the others.[10] So, too, the visions of Zarathustra take place outside of space and time. His first vision in Airyanem Vaeja takes place on the eve of the Nuruz, the New Year day of spring. The *Nilamata* calls this equinoxial New Year the "day God creates the world at sunrise". The festival it orders salutes the guardian Manus of humanities yet to come. It is in the present cycle, of the fourteenth Manu, that Kashyapa reclaims Kashmir from the waters.

In the Shaiva scriptures, four states support the twelve ranges of consciousness which, on the wheel of energies, create and dissolve the worlds. It is a movement not of Genesis, but of Paligenesis, birth again, which is birth from the waters.

The six *karshvars* of the Iranians, with Airyanem Vaeja the centre, are surrounded by Vourukasha, the ocean which is, at once, the lost sea of Central Asia and the realm of infinite lights and waters in which the three holy mountains of theophany stand. Vourukasha has engulfed the twelve mythic zones of earth so that human beings may no more pass from one to

[10] *Datistan-i-Dinik*, XXXVI 3-6, *Pahlavi Texts* II, pp. 78-9, quoted by Henry Corbin in *Terre Celeste et Corps de Resurrection*, Eranos-Jahrbuch XXII, Rhein-Verlag-Zurich, 1954, pp. 114-5.

Henry Corbin follows the exposition to resolve the argument on the original situation of Airyanem Vaeja by its meaning to spiritual, not geographical history: "The presence which constitutes the centre, and, as such, is origin, not result of spatial references, is not situated, but situative."

the other as in the beginning. Their restoration will be in the sacrament of the Haoma (Soma), extracted from the plant which grows on the heights of the mountains and in the depths of the sea. By the Pahlavi era, the Caspian Sea was regarded as a remnant of the lost sea, which had once reached beyond Kashmar, in Turkestan, still bearing its name.

Herodotus uses the earliest Greek compound from the root : *Kas-patyros*,[11] "of the Kasha father", or fatherland of the *Kashas* for the region between Gandhara (the east of modern Afghanistan) and Kashmir. The term embodies the Indo-European elements of the Sanskrit *Kashyapa*. *Kas-pi-a*, the Greek name of the sea, is, etymologically, "of the people of the Kasha father". Ptolemy's term *Kaspeirans* for a people spread from Bactria and Gandhara to Mathura, which he calls Mathura-of-the-Gods, combines the same elements.

The Rishi Kashyapa is, *par excellence*, *prajapati*, progenitor and protector of creatures. The name of the Himalayan land reclaimed by him from the waters commemorates the cosmic mountain, Kash-mir, and the waters of space, upon which the coils of the mythic Shesha support the sleeping Vishnu during the cyclic dissolution. The Indo-European languages conserve the association of cosmic mountain and ocean : Sanskrit, *Su-meru*, Greek *To-mar-os*, the birthplace of the Gods. The cypress of Kashmar, planted by Zarathustra's convert, Vistaspa, before the first fire temple, grew to legendary proportions with the expansion of the faith throughout the region which had been the prehistoric sea. It was its tree of life, from ancient roots, significantly preserving the sacred name.

The Greek sources, compared with the Chinese, confirm the usage whereby Ptolemy presents the *Kasperoi* as a mightily expanded people of many branches, with Kashmir itself preserving their name and sacred origins. Among the cities of their realm he lists the "City of Kaspeira". The Chinese speak of the learned and eloquent brethren of "the charming city of

11 Greek possesses no *sh*.

Kashmira" who were invited by Ashoka to his council, employing the name of the land for the capital.[12] Linking the various compounds and derivatives from the ancient term, including the Kashmiri *Kashir*, it is the root *Kash*, and not the mountain, hero or city with which it combines which is the philological constant.

On the Sea of Vourukasha,[13] the shining Yima (Jamshid, Yama), the resplendent in beauty, received the command to build the ark and to place within it "the loveliest of beings, the most beautiful and gracious, to preserve them from the mortal winter let loose by the demoniac powers, that they may one day people a world transfigured." The ark was lighted from within by a radiance of glory which required neither sun nor moon nor stars. By the light which has no beginning, the *xvarnah* of glory and victorious destiny, Ahura Mazda created "these many creatures, beautiful and good and marvellous, shining in the radiance of life."

> The Shining Ones who will make a new creation, exempt from age and death, decomposition and corruption, eternally alive, eternally ascending, that the dead may be resurrected and immortality come to the living and the world be renewed to our wish.
>
> Yasht XIX, *Zend Avesta*

[12] *Tsa-a-han-ching*, Chapter 23, quoted in *Yuan Chwang*, Oriental Trans. Fund, New Series, Vol. XIV, Royal Asiatic Society, I. p. 264.

[13] The "centre" is transferred with each and every experience to a different space, to Azarbaijan as a necessity of the Sasanian soul, which sought to bring the holy land within the borders of the later empire, to *Kashmira Mandala* as an experience of the Indian. The language of the Gathas of Zarathustra is not the language of Media in the West, but the Indo-Iranian language of the East. *Hapta Hindu* (*Sapta-Sindhu*), *karshvar* of the seven rivers, *below* Airyanem Vaeja, is well identified with the western Indus system.

"The meaning of the centre, *medium mundi*, as the place in which psychic events ever and each time take place, permits us, as the space of hierophanies, to place the problem on a level where tradition and positive history are no longer opposed."

Terre Celeste, op. cit. Henry Corbin, pp. 118-19.

In the first and second centuries A.D., Greek artists under the patronage of the Buddhist kings of Gandhara, Bactria and Mathura created the first images of the Buddha. From concepts of the Hellenistic Apollo and his dominant drapery the image moved to the Buddhist concept until an exquisite style of Greek carving had come to serve the transcendental vision. The aura of the Saoshyants, the *xvarnah* of the promised saviour conquered the stone. From the halo of the Lord Wisdom of the "Kasha" tradition both the Buddha image in the East and the angelic figures of early Gnostic Christian iconography received their auras. The vision is complete in the celestial Graeco-Bactrian faces of the Buddhas of the Kabul Museum and the dancers among the water symbols of the rose-tinged tiles of the monastery of the Harwan Valley in Kashmir, whose etherial drapery is transfigured to pure music. There, the dramatic contrasts of the Graeco-Bactrian collections are repeated, the serene exaltation of the enlightened ones offset by a series of intensely human character studies and caricatures. In Kabul, the human heads form a collection of statuettes, in Harwan a portrait gallery in tile. The water birds of the Ajanta paintings reappear in Harwan, as though in a review by Kashmir of themes from the whole Buddhist world, its own love of water, music and the purity of Himalayan contour predominant.

For the Iranians, Iran Vej, source of the celestial waters, is lost as a geographical reality. For the Greeks, by the time of Pindar, ordinary, men no longer knew the "wonderful Hyperborean way" back to that spiritual cradle. In India, the concept of a circle at the summits of the world, which are the summits of the soul and scene of its victory and completion, is preserved as a reality both of faith and geography.

The Kashmiris have played their part in the drama with the unconscious grandeur of folk experience, analysing the spiritual events of pilgrimage associated with their own earth and waters both scientifically and in experiences of ecstasy. The tale of the battle of the Gods for Kashmir as told in the

Nilamata, and the festivals it prescribes to shape life by the parable of the human being battling for the immortals against demons who destroy a divine earth and innocent creation survive as themes of a philosopy which claims to be the lost key to the *Vedas*. The story of thought in Kashmir is of its use of this key of its own to discover the meaning of every philosophy it encountered to the original concept of the human being. Its effort was to confirm its own vision by understanding of the far-flung manifestations of the human spirit in its intuitions and gnosis. From the first mythological poet to twentieth century Zinda Kaul, whose lover from eternity sends the streams and flowers as a personal message, Kashmir has regarded its own beauty as revelation of the true reality, and the object of its philosophy has been to restore the first pure order. Among lakes reflecting the heavens, the image of creation is of reflection. A heaven is reflected upon an earth, an experience upon an experiencing being.

In the philosophical literature which followed the literature of mytho-history, Kashmir gave highly systematic development to the mode of perception which visualised this relationship of the universe and the human being, governed by one law of musical, mathematical beauty. Its particular quality was in a merging of devotional poetry with Pythagorean concepts of ethics and cosmic justice as phases of a law of metamorphosis and creative evolution. Peoples came, particularly by the original routes from Central Asia. There are contacts with Sumer and China, even legends of the lost tribes of Israel. The thought which was Kashmir's flowed on uninterrupted, and the same events of mytho-history are assigned to one era after another, everyone claiming, in turn, to have drained the lake and to have received the sacred book revealed by Nila Naga. Knowing that they were guarded by a Naga, notes Hiuen Tsiang, "the Kashmiris, beautiful and fond of learning, could crow over their neighbours."

Every shrine of Kashmir has its *Mahatmaya*, its book combining a conservative topographical accuracy with puranic

material of interest to spiritual rather than chronological history. Chronology stands in the way of the feeling of unbroken continuity which so strongly characterises Kashmir. Critical history suffers, but spiritual history is clearly outlined. Perhaps the most remarkable chapter in the spiritual history of Kashmir is the Brahmanical chronicle of its Muslim rulers, from their ascension in the fourteenth century to the time of Akbar. Jonaraja, Shrivara, Prajyabhatta and Shuka continued the better known *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana. Their evaluation of the "Musula" kings is on the strict basis of their sincerity in the practice of their own religion. To be sincere in their own religion meant to protect the Hindus in theirs. Never is Islam blamed by the pandit historians for the lapses to iconoclasm or intolerance which Musula kings, under the influence of "drink, outsiders or she-serpents" might undergo. The pandits made a gay sport of defeating the ambassadors of the Persian kings in debates on Persian prosody and in outsinging the Turks in the "difficult meters of Tauranian songs". They received presents of rare birds, jewelled musical instruments and boats with beautiful sails from their Muslim patrons for their victories. They disapproved when the king spent his time giving music lessons, or following the advice of she-serpents in politics, or she-doctors in sickness, or getting drunk and falling from the crystal room on the twelfth floor of the palace. When he patronised letters and science and developed mineral resources to relieve the land tax, the Sanskrit language did not contain adequate praise for the worshipper of Allah. Muslim rulers whom the Brahman historians considered true worshippers of Allah were elevated to the rank of the Hindu gods. "Incarnation of Vishnu", "portion of Mahadeva" were descriptions of Sultan Zeinu'l-abadin, the Muslim whose intelligence and piety met the ultimate Brahmanical ideal.

The literary history which throws light upon the continuity of thought and feeling in Kashmir employs a number of languages. The Gilgit manuscripts, discovered in a Buddhist

stupa in 1931, are a fifth or sixth century Sanskrit literature of Kashmir. Kashmiris who wrote in Persian created a literature no less Kashmir's own. The Persian of Kashmir stands in relation to that of Iran somewhat as American literature to English. Ladakh, closely connected with Kashmir by spiritual ties from the beginning of the Buddhist era, possesses an enchanting literature, folk and religious, which may be regarded as the heritage of Kashmir's "outer mandala", as is the Dogri with its wealth of songs. The Gujars, shepherds of the heights, bequeath an exaltation of melody and verse rare even in the Himalayas, while a full evaluation of the Ladakhi religious Masque, with its dithyrambic choruses and Himalayan imagery would be as a liturgic soul to integrate the scattered monuments of Buddhist art waiting among the irises and deodars to be reassembled by the vision of a Nagarjuna. That vision, in its original form, was restored to Kashmir in the revolt against the later Buddhism which brought about the Shaiva renaissance.

For the Shaiva way of seeing, the urge of cosmogony prompts the individual, no less than the waters, to shape and reshape the world. Sects and cliques must be periodically swept away. The energy of both world and individual is in a meeting of positive and negative forces, vibrating everywhere, blooming in ranges of consciousness, ever, at every moment, stirring in the *first* stirring. Within the atom, according to monistic Shaivism, the two phases of this ever first *spanda* energy collide, the powers of desire and limitation : Kāma, the outpouring urge of unlimited energy, and Kalā, the artist and restrainer. Anu, the atom, is the theatre of their performance, creating the forms which the Lord, in His play and picture-making, casts upon a screen of radiance. The experiencer is himself the theatre, for he is the dimensionless *bindu*, the point in which the powers of the pairs generating the universe focus their eternal meeting.

The Kashmir Shaiva theory is centred in the evidence of psychosomatic exercises conducted in a spirit of experiment

for over five hundred years. In the course of these experiments a system of practical techniques for bringing about the face to face recognition of the unconscious by the conscious mind was developed. It is in this meeting, according to the Kashmir theory, that the human being becomes lord of his circle, his destiny, and that the harmonious action of the pair, *ends and means*, with its spiritual and ethical consequences is established. Without the union of this pair, it is not really a world which is generated by Kāma and Kalā, but a confusion of ethical problems.

The story of the experiments of Advaita (non-dualistic) Shaivism, and of their bearing upon life and living, forms the literary history of Kashmir from the eighth to the fourteenth century, introducing philosopher-poets, writers on the dance and aesthetics, composers of mystery plays dramatising theory and findings of a Tantric psychoanalysis. The system divides its literature into three branches. The first is the *Spanda Shastra*, the body of poems and treatises commentating the verses of the founder of the school, Vasugupta, on the world as energy and aspiration, in reply to Buddhist nihilists. The *Pratyabhijna Shastra*, on the great recognition, develops the philosophical concept of the *spanda* energy in commentaries which preserve the poetic eagerness of the first generation of disciples. In the midst of a logical argument with the nihilists, the prose cries out to ask in verse how much fruit the Supreme Brahma can endure in the outpour of beauty and blooming. Utpalacharya, whose *Ishvara Pratyabhijna* opens this second phase of the Shaiva renaissance, gave his logical arguments an exalted form of devotional verse.

The greatest literary development took place in the *Tantra*, the third branch of the system, its liturgy and mystery play. *Agama*, it had "come down" by tradition, a dialogue in eternity between Shiva and His energy, the Shakti which is a part of Himself as part of the moon the moonbeam, yet in whom He knows Himself by seeing Himself in a mirror. Kashmir rewrote and rearranged what was *Agama* to suit its

changing experience. Shesha Naga, himself, had no objection to seeing his poetry rewritten. He had composed a cosmogony in honour of the renaissance and Kashmir's return to its senses after a period of confusion caused by nihilists and dualists. As the movement developed and personal creativeness grew from Vasugupta's fifty-two verses to Abhinava Gupta's *Tantraloka* of five thousand eight hundred stanzas and the long list of his other works, Abhinava rewrote Shesha's *Adhara Karikas* from the standpoint of the perfectly developed monism.

Vasugupta's disciple, Somananda, claimed that the sacred mystery of the beauty and the blooming had been transmitted by a fifth generation ancestor of his own from fifteen generations of long-lived teachers before Vasugupta. In any case, Kashmir viewed it not as a new discovery, but the return to a point of view of its own under provocation of outside doctrines which had reached the limit of absurdity.

In the beginning, Buddhism had not been an outside doctrine. Kashmiris wrote Buddhist scriptures of their own,[14] and missionaries to Central Asia, Khorasan, China and Japan were based in Kashmir. Statues of Buddha, by order of the *Nilamata Puranam*, had their place beside those of Shiva, and, left to themselves, the Kashmiris practiced a happy folk blending of the cults which made Hieun Tsiang call them "orthodox and heterodox at once". The Laws of Nila Naga required them to sweep and decorate the houses of the Buddhists on Buddhist Festivals, to the accompaniment of dancing and singing, and to paint pictures on the walls of Buddhist temples "according to the instructions of the Buddhists". The Birthday of the Lord Buddha, which Nila Naga had predicted, was to be observed as a "joyous three day festival", in which lamps, incense, flowers, perfumes and dances were to be provided for his statues by the Kashmiris, and presents of fruit and books were to be made to the

[14] *The Gilgit Manuscript Series*, ed. by Nalinaksha Dutt, the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies, No. 71.

Buddhists. It was outsiders who forced their own ways on others, and a struggle has taken place, from the beginning, between outside sectarians and the Kashmiris with their natural faith in mysteries of a rhythm and a radiance older and more lasting than the earth.

When Hiuen Tsiang came from China in the seventh century, the King of Kashmir gave him five assistants and twenty scribes to copy the sacred books Kashmiris had written or collected.[15] The Gilgit manuscripts confirm the Chinese tale that it had been the Nagas, the spiritual guardians of Kashmir, who had acclaimed the Buddha, receiving the apostle Majjhantika[16] as a person bringing an acceptable version of their own doctrines to their protectorate. The Buddha himself, returning through the air from the conversion of the Dragon (Naga) Udyana, had remarked to his companion as they passed over the green vales of Kashmir that this paradise, which would be like Indra's pleasure garden, would be the home of the "true great Buddhist congregation".[17]

Five hundred Buddhist saints had arrived by air when, exasperated by King Ashoka's failure to distinguish the *arhat* from the common monk in a quarrel over a heretical treatise, he had taken them to the banks of the Ganges to test them in the ordeal by drowning. The *arhats* made use of their powers to fly away to Kashmir, where they settled in the beautiful vales without being harassed as heretics. Hiuen Tsiang goes on to say that Ashoka, in great distress, followed them to Kashmir to apologise and persuade them to return. Nothing, however, could induce them. So the pious king built five hundred monasteries for them and gave the whole of Kashmir as a present to the Buddhist Church.[18]

Hiuen Tsiang gives a detailed account of how the fourth

[15] *Life of Hieun Tsiang*, by the Shaman Hwui Li, trans. by Samuel Beal, London, 1911.

[16] *Gilgit Mss. Series, op. cit.* Sanskrit text I, pp. 5-6.

[17] Lien-hua-mien-ching, Chap. II, quoted in *Yuan Chwang* Vol. I, p. 264.

[18] *ibid.* p. 267.

great Buddhist Council, under Kanishka,[19] Emperor of the Kushans, came to be held in Kashmir. Kanishka would have preferred to hold it in his own capital, but Gandhara was admittedly too hot and damp. Rajagriha had a quarrelsome atmosphere. And Kashmir was the land in which the records of the council should be preserved. The delegates composed three hundred thousand stanzas of explanatory *shastras*. All learning from remote antiquity was reviewed, and the Buddhist scriptures were again made clear and distinct. King Kanishka then had the finished treatises written on copper plates and closed them in stone boxes, which he deposited in a tope built for the purpose. They were to be guarded in *Kashmira Mandala*, and none were to be removed. Those who wished to consult them could do so within the *Mandala* itself.[20]

Vasugupta's quarrel was not with the Buddhism of which Kashmir had been legitimate guardian. The name of Nagarjuna, initiate of the true mysteries of the Greater Vehicle, was remembered with such romantic affection by the Kashmiris that it served them in the fifteenth century as a term by which to praise their favourite Muslim King for his skill in chemistry and attachment to the doctrine of Nirvana. Between the sixth and eighth centuries a change took place in the Buddhist outlook under the influence of outside propagandists. The development was to have far-reaching consequences, for it not only infuriated the Nagas and alienated them from Buddhism. The monistic reaction which it provoked in Kashmir was felt in Central Asia and Khorasan by the avenues of spiritual communication which had long existed, but which had been well developed in the Kushan era and employed for the missionary activities of the Buddhists.

[19] The Kushans, the most powerful tribe of the Yueh-chih from north-western China, conquered the Kabul Valley and Gandhara about 50 A.D. Kanishka, the "Second Ashoka", as patron of Buddhism and Gandhara art, ascended the throne perhaps 125 or 128 A.D. The southern capital of the Kushans was Mathura.

[20] *Yuan Chwang, op. cit.* I, pp. 270 sq.

Vasugupta's disciples Kallata and Somananda were actively propagating the *spanda* revelation during the reign of King Avantivarman (855-83 A.D.), an age of political renaissance and adventurous expansion for Kashmir. The Kashmiris claimed that nothing but spiritual merit could pass their own mountain walls. They themselves went everywhere. They basked under palm trees on the shore of the southern ocean and, "sincere in the observance of the sacred law, set forth for the conquest of the world to impose prohibition of the slaughter of living beings".[21] Or, a valid cause for a military expedition would be to stop the weaving of cloth of gold with the imprint of royal footprints. One such fabric, woven in the south, had been worn by the Queen of Kashmir, to the distaste of the Kashmiris. Or, there would be a romantic disappearance into the north, with its memories of sacred "Aryanaka". Lalitaditya, the greatest and most inquisitive of kings, left army and kingdom to go that way.

Communication and contacts with the north and west, no less than with Tibet and China, were well maintained, but it was a mode of perception growing from within which brought another movement to meet the Kashmir monistic renaissance on that ancient ground of crossroads, Central Asia. The acceptance of the beauty and the blooming, the universe of energy and aspiration which Kashmir propagated, were an attitude restored to Western Asia during the same years, from within itself. Islam had invested Adam with the mystery of the Word, and the angels had been commanded to bow to him. The world of the Caliphate of the Celestial Adam was not an impure or unreal exile, but material to be shaped in a second creation, our own creative evolution. Islamic Gnosis[22] built its universe upon the Quranic investiture of Adam with the angelic powers, superseding the Adam of the battle of light

[21] *Rajatarangini*, Kalhana Pandit, trans. Aurel Stein, III, 27-30, p. 75.

[22] *Erfan*, *Ma'rifah*, the Arabic technical equivalent of the Greek Gnosis. The mode of knowledge in which facts are transfigured by illumination. *Arif*, the Gnostic, "he who knows", Fem. *Arifah*, Plural, "*Orafa*".

and darkness as conceived by the Manichaeans of Central Asia, and replacing the fallen Adam of Church-Council Christianity. It likewise eliminated from other systems of Gnosis converging in it such elements of pessimism as may have come to be associated with the status of Adam-Angelos or the spiritual circumstances or implications of his guilt or fall. The elements uncongenial to Erfan were precisely those to which contemporary Kashmir objected in reshaping traditional materials and refuting dualistic cosmogonies. Erfan is, itself, the *Bodhi* illumination in terms of an Islamic piety, and its literature points not to influence from the later Buddhism, but to a movement allied to Kashmir's monistic reaction against it.

Writer by writer and saint by saint, from the Abbasid era onward, the parallels between the poet-philosophers of Erfan and the Kashmir Shaiva writers are intimate. The works of Jabir-ibn-Hayyan, the renowned eighth century alchemist of Baghdad,[23] disciple of the Imam Jafar Sadiq, bear close comparison with the writings of the first two generations of Vasugupta's disciples. At the crown of the two movements, in the early eleventh century, Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Abhinava Gupta present a single universe of angelic energies and logically related experiences of consciousness. Their systems may be compared point by point, their technical vocabularies translated and exchanged with ease and accuracy. The historical meeting of the Shaiva philosophy and Erfan in the fourteenth century is the climax, not the beginning of a movement. A six hundred year prelude of affinities over a wide area remains to be explored in the comparison of the Sanskrit and Persian-Arabic sources.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, an adventurer from the borders of Tibet, a convert to Islam, entered the service of the independent Queen of Kashmir and succeeded in marrying her. It was not the first time in Kashmir history

[23] Jabir's scattered and fragmentary works have been made available by the devoted labours of Paul Kraus, *Jabir ibn Hayyan*, Cairo 1942.

that a ruling Queen proved a "political she-serpent" or to have "trampled the flowers of the lotus lake as an infuriated she-elephant". The crude Tibetan, under the title of Sultan Shamsu'd-din, massacred the Kashmiris to convert them. When, later in the century, "hosts of saints", fleeing the political upheavals of Timur's invasions arrived, a totally different Islam appeared and the battle of ideologies which was to preoccupy Kashmir for the next six hundred years began.

The Islam taught by the saints and seers of Iran and Central Asia had nothing in common with the coercion of the scheming conqueror of the Queen. Quranic authority was on the side of the "Orafa". The Quran not only prohibits compulsion in religion, but violence or the use of force for any purpose but self-defence, even there, as the resort of those unable to rise to the heights in which good is returned for evil. The masters of the "upward way" found ready followers in Kashmir. To indulge weakness, they taught, by invoking the historical precedent of some other person's weakness was not to practice Islam. To honour the wayfarer and orphan, to struggle for self-mastery, not even to argue of religion unless the discussion be conducted in the gentlest manner, to make no difference between peoples or prophets was the law of Muhammed. And so it happened that the name of Muhammed came to Kashmir as an invocation of what it itself held dear, a love of life intense enough to regard all life as one, and a faith in salvation through knowledge.

The meeting with the Shaiva seers of those who lived Islam in this way was personalised, in the Kashmiri way, in legends of the friendship of a Grand Master of the Gnostic Kubrawiyya Order with the poetess whose title in Kashmir today is, at once, Yogeshvari, Mistress of Yoga, and Arifah, the Gnostic, Lalla. Through him, Mir Sayyed Ali Hamadani,[24] "Shah

[24] A full bibliography of Mir Sayyed Ali's writings is given by Ali Asgar Hikmat in his monograph: *Les Voyages d'un Mystique Persan de Hamadan au Cashmere*, Gunther, Paris. Extract from *Journal Asiatique*.

Hamadan", Kashmir established contact with a line of spiritual succession which fought political theocracy throughout Islam: Najmu'd-din Al Kobra, Ala'ud-dolah Semnani, Muhammed Nur Baksh. Annual ceremonies and experiences of group ecstasy commemorate Shah Hamadan's mission in Kashmir today, and the *Khangah* in which he taught is a beloved shrine. Through him, who earned his living sewing caps and who warned kings that to become Muslims they must practice manual labour in the footsteps of the prophet and pious caliphs, Kashmir laid foundations for the Hindu-Muslim *sadhana* at the heart of all its subsequent renaissances in thought and poetry.

By the end of the fourteenth century, the Kashmiri personality of an indigenous order of "Orafa" had been established. The *Tantra*, with its emotional wealth of liturgy and poetry, had overflowed in folk song. Kashmiri, rich in Shaiva terminology and the creative adaptability of a child of Sanskrit, was a medium ready to receive the Persian, as the Tantric Liturgy of Bliss to receive the call of the Sufi to the quest of the Promised Beloved. The consecration of Kashmiri poetry to the quest of the Beloved, in the century of Lalla, is the overflow of the two streams in a rhapsody of mutual discovery. Love poetry was ever to be the quest of the One who dazzles, Savitar, Maitreya, Imam. With Lalla, it is the Spirit Shiva, with Madalasa, the great Yogini before her, the Elexir. Rupa Bhavani sought the universe through love, Habba Khatun, the Queen dethroned, lost love in order to find it. Arnimal, at the opening of yet another great poetic era, the nineteenth century, turned nostalgy for the lover who had deserted her to the Beloved from whose caress bloom the apple blossoms of Kashmir. That a woman should have inaugurated every poetic era is the Song of Songs of the *Tantra* living on in Kashmir, the worship of God through man, of Brahma through a blade of grass. Man cannot sing of man as woman sings of the God she seeks through the man she loves.

Gentleness and the Way of Love were the faith which shaped

the "Order of Rishis" established by Lalla's "milk child" Nuru'd-din. The Muslim saints of Kashmir, Davud Mishqati explains, "followed the religious practices of Brahmans and Buddhists".[25] Nuru'd-din, the "Preceptor of all Rishis", added to such extreme practices as living on dry leaves to avoid taking life a Kashmiri sense of humour and the characteristic energy of the village. His Rishis taught crafts, grew fruit as a public service, lent a hand with the harvest and all forms of manual labour. Songs of the saints and work songs went together. The saints are still invoked in Kashmir in rhythmic invocations as aids to labour, commemorating their participation in the fellowship of labour and the importance they attached to it as foundation of a harmonious society. Boats are moved and loads are lifted in their names, pet names, for the test of a saint was to acquire such as name as "Rishi Mol", "Rishi Father", to be "king" for all Kashmiris and to have meatless weeks observed in his memory by Hindus and Muslims together in the city of his tomb.

One of the kings upon whom the Kashmiris call in their labour was king not only in the spiritual, but also the political sense, Sultan Zeinu'l-abadin, who presided over the political secularism which emerged with effortless joy in the second century of Kashmir's acceptance of Islam. The Brahman historians and rhapsodists of the fifteenth century surpassed the Saladdin romances of the troubadours in their election of Zeinu'l-abadin, "Badshah", the *beau-ideal* of the villager, as Prince of Chivalry. To them we owe the description of the tanks of cream and wine with which he fed "all the people", of his restoration of the books of the Brahmans and their temples, his passion for science, social reform and the doctrine of Nirvana.

> "Where now can be found one like King Jaina in greatness of intellect or in the art of invention, in fondness for song and music, in capacity for rhetorical discussion, in writing

[25] *Asraru'l Abrar*, Ms. Kashmir State Research Department.

books, in listening to holy shastras, or in composing new works ?

There was not a branch of learning, or craft, or literature or fine arts which did not become celebrated in the world during the reign of King Shri Jaina.

Even cooks, porters and women composed literary works in his day. Their books still fill all the houses."[26]

Representing the opposing, "outside" theocratic point of view, an invader of the following century, Mirza Haidar Dughlat, wrote that Zeinu'l-abadin, "in order to humour all the nations in the world cared neither for religion nor irreligion."[27]

For the Kashmiris, "Badshah" embodied in himself the ideal Islam. The authority with which the Kashmiri folk song blends the Persian and Indian literary and musical motifs cultivated in his court shows the extent to which the people themselves participated in his restoration of the characteristically Kashmiri sense of values and ideals. The *Shahnamah* of Ferdowsi, which served Pandit Bhattavatara as a model for his *Jainavilasa*, had restored Iran to its sacral origins, building from the ancient foundations of the ideal nation to the Islamic era and its new humanism. Bhattavatara studied the *Shahnamah*, "vast as the sea", to understand the role of King Jaina in bringing to Islam Kashmir's profound and beautiful heritage. The crystal tombstone which the Kashmiris placed upon his tomb represented what he had been to them. They had seen themselves in him. No smoke rose from the houses on the day of his death. No household cooked. He had been the mirror of their hopes, and evil times and struggles awaited Kashmir without him.

[26] *Jainatarangini*, Shrivara, *op. cit.* III, p. 135.

[27] *Tarikhi Rashidi*, Mirza Haidar Dughlat, E. Denison Ross, London, 1895, p. 434.

Shrivara's history covers three generations. He had known the great men of the realm from the beginning of their careers. How necessary had been the crystal, to keep them true to themselves and to the ideals of Kashmir, his Greek Chorus of commentary shows. Allama Ahmad,[28] poet laureate and senior minister, for all his proved ability in administration, fell a prey to intriguers in the end. The "outside" Sayyeds, whom Zeinu'l-abadin's loyal protegé, Tajibhatta, had managed to remove from Kashmir, were recalled by Ahmad at the instigation of Tajibhatta's rivals. The arrogant Sayyeds, who killed the birds and treated the Kashmiris disrespectfully, and whose she-serpents at court undermined the royal intelligence, returned to destroy not only Tajibhatta, but all that King Jaina had accomplished in fifty years.

An epic struggle followed. The villagers pooled their rice, armed themselves with farm weapons and formed a national army. Hindus from Jammu joined the Muslims of the valley to oust the Sayyeds. Throughout the story, which Shrivara tells as a breath-taking drama, the principles of Kashmira are placed in the mouths of the loyal advisors the drunken young king will not hear.

From this point on, outside Musalman fanatics are the villains of Kashmir history. In the invasions which followed, folk proverb promised that whenever things would be bad enough, there would be another Tazi Bhat. Invaders who arrived under pretext of restoring orthodoxy were mellowed or expelled. The arch-inquisitor of this category was Mirza Haidar Dughlat of Kashgar, who came once to raid and loot, and a second time to occupy Kashmir in the name of the Emperor Humayun. In his own memoirs he tells of how the infidels bought their lives with their possessions,[29] and of his services to orthodoxy in his inquisition of the Kashmir heretics, "like whom there are none in the world". The followers of

[28] The Malika Allama Ahmad wrote a biography of Nuru'd-din.

[29] *Tarikhi Rashidi, op. cit.*

Shah Hamadan's grand-disciple, Nur Baksh, were the particular object of his inquisition. He described them as "heretics and atheists who lead men astray, who do not know what is lawful or unlawful, who consider vigils and abstinence in food acts of piety and purity, observe forty day retirements, walk proudly in the way of interior holiness omitting the observance of religious forms and ceremonies, and maintaining that the former is independent of the latter".

Mirza Haidar paid for his inquisition with his life. An uprising on the lines of Tajibhatta's destroyed his garrisons and enabled the mob to kill him in a street fight. A unique eye-witness account is preserved in the manuscript of a certain Sayyed Ahmad,[30] who to save a corpse from desecration took Mirza Haidar's body from the mob and gave it a decent burial.

It was in the period following Mirza Haidar's reign as arbiter of orthodoxy that Kashmir took up the question of defining orthodoxy for itself. To do so, it turned to the oldest of the classical legal sources of Islam and to the liberal authorities of the day in Mecca. The principles at stake in the struggle between the Kashmiris and the Musalman invaders were closely analogous to those of the Reformation in contemporary Europe and passions ran as high. Those who claimed that inner holiness does not depend upon forms and ceremonies undermined the claim of the State to spiritual as well as temporal authority, and were therefore, according to Mirza Haidar and his school, heretics deserving of death. To the sixteenth century intellectuals of Kashmir, represented by philosopher-poets whose works and biographies survive, the tenet that the individual is his own supreme authority and must think for himself *into* Islamic typifications appeared the grandeur of Islam. That personal conduct is the only criterion of orthodoxy was a tenet which disqualified Mirza Haidar Dughlat's claim to it, or the claims of other violent raiders and looters to being Muslims at all.

[30] Mss, Kashmir State Research Department.

A leading philosopher-poet of the "Reformation" was Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi, whose disciple, Habibullah, has left a biography of him in verse, and whose own *diwan*, romances and Quranic commentary survive.[31] Sarfi visited the Central Asian and Iranian centres of the Gnostic Orders, associated with Kashmir since Shah Hamadan and studied law in Mecca, with a view to formulating the relationship between rational and ecstatic experience. The Quranic image of the worlds is of interlocking storeys, *tabaqan*, and Kashmiri commonsense could see that rather than argue over whether angels' wings have feathers lawyers should practice law and ecstatics talk to the angels. Habibullah's *diwan* is more lyrical than Sarfi's, as Habib is afforded the luxury of assuming the premises proved, and free to sing of the liberation of gardens and gardens of roses from armies and armies of crows. To him, as to Zeinu'l-abadin, the Hindu pilgrim, walking thousands of miles to Kashmir, confirmed Kashmir's identity as holy land and halo of the world.

Rupa Bhavani, the Shaiva poetess, from whose work selections will be included in Vol. II of *The Way of the Swan*, represented the ecstasy of the era. According to tradition, she carried on a dialogue in verse with Shah Qalandar, an important Muslim poet of the day, and was revered as inspired by the Goddess of love and gentleness, whose spirit preserves Kashmir from the violence and inner conflicts which motivate invaders.

Sarfi in his person represented the ideal balance of ecstasy and orthodoxy. A review of the law for its own sake, pure law, shows that the creative canonist, no less than the Arif, thought into Islam through experience, discarding the outworn and adapting eternal principles to the new. The nine hundred year panorama of Islamic law behind Sarfi showed no less creative a process of evolution than Abbasid science at its prime. It had been, by its very function, secular from the beginning. Its organic nature, as a process and not a monu-

[31] Kashmir State Research Department collection.

ment of precedents, was as much in need of freedom from state control as the individual in his spiritual experience. In the theocratic state of Mirza Haidar Dughlat's concept, the judiciary was an instrument for the enforcement of conformity. In the concept of Abu Hanifa of the Golden Age, whom Mirza Haidar pretended to represent without understanding, the creative canonist turns the law to the service of progress. The difference between him and the conformist is that the latter tries to reproduce historical precedents, while the canonist who helps the law to evolve deduces principles from precedents and reapplies them to new circumstances, which may be in direct contradiction to the old.

The titles of affection bestowed upon Sarfi acknowledged him as the spirit of Abu Hanifa in his century, and, at once, the spirit of Erfan. He was invested with the "cloaks" of a number of orders associated with the Kubrawiyya, the Chistiyya and Naqshibandi. Every resurgence of Kubrawiyya contacts has meant a renaissance for Kashmir in thought and poetry, down to the eighteenth century *Futuhatu'l Kubrawiyya* of Abdu'l Wahab Nuri,[32] a magnificent work reviewing the history of Kashmir's contacts with the spiritual currents which ran counter to theocracy throughout the centuries. When Sarfi returned from his legal studies in Mecca and his travels in Iran and Central Asia, he organised a delegation of Kashmiri writers and intellectuals to wait upon Akbar in Delhi and ask for help in merging Kashmir in the India of his dream. It meant dethroning the Chak dynasty of patriotic Kashmir Sultans, specifically, the husband of the poetess Habba Khatun. The principles of the Reformation outweighed considerations represented by Yusuf Chak.

Akbar's chronicler, Abu'l-Fazl, gives more space in his account of Kashmir to sacred waters and miraculous springs, to tulips growing on housetops and the flowers of mountain meadows than to the support given Akbar by the Kashmir

[32] Mss. Kashmir State Research Department.

intellectuals, a highly revealing phase of the *sadhana* introduced by Lalla and Shah Hamadan. The movement headed by Sarfi and his connections with Akbar's preceptor, Sheikh Selim Chisti, along with the currents which met it from the "Illuminative" renaissance of the *Ishraqiyun* of Safavid Isfahan are an important chapter in the spiritual history of the century. Had the example of Kashmir been followed, a secular India might have come into being then and there.

The methods of Akbar in his campaign for a united India involved an attempt to supplant orthodox confessions by a fusion of doctrines. They prepared the ground for Aurungzeb's role of champion and restorer of orthodoxy. The Rishis of Kashmir with their commonsense, "every one of them a pearl in the ocean of love and union",[33] preferred a union of lives. Orthodox confessions were not to be abandoned, but preserved in their integrity. The grace of Zeinu'l-abadin was all that was required. The divine religion, Din-e-Ilahi, was not to be viewed as a doctrine compounded from here and there. It was, rather, the human love at the heart of every religion. The Kashmiri village Brahman, when he took the thread, was invested with tradition. He accepted a certain discipline in his habits. In his innocent years, before assuming the thread and his responsibilities, he made himself one with his Muslim "milk relatives" by sharing the food of their table. The village Rishis, in their practical way, believed that normal relationships begin in childhood and psychological difficulties can be bridged in the formative years.

Kashmir went to the root of various problems arising from the psychological mistakes of orthodoxy. Devotional Shaivism had proclaimed caste the first bar to the Mysteries, and, whatever happened to the other castes, only Brahmans remained in Kashmir. Under the supervision of village Rishis, Brahmans and Muslims happily practised the Chinese form of agriculture which requires performance of sanitary functions reserved by caste

[33] *Rishi-Namah* of Bahahu'd-din Matu Kashmiri, Mss. Kashmir State Research Department.

Hindus of the later era for untouchables. It was a source of astonishment to the learned of India to come all the way to Kashmir in order to visit a famous Sanskrit grammarian or logician and find him ploughing his field or fertilising it in person.

The final test of Kashmir's ability to withstand disruption from without was in the Afghan and Sikh invasions of the nineteenth century. The Afghans began with a *jehad* against the leading Brahman families. They ended striking coins in the name of Nuru'd-din and writing poetry. The Sikhs avenged the *jehad* of the Afghans while the Kashmiris borrowed passages from the Islamic poets to illustrate their version of the divine dance of the Lord Krishna and the Gopis. Aflame with love, the wild rose sought Him in the forest, while the flowers of the Kashmir spring heralded the victory of Rama over the demoniac creation. In an extraordinary Kashmiri *Ramayana* of this period, Ravana, the King of the Demons is depicted as Sita's father, and an Oedipus tangle at the root of the struggle with darkness.

It was at this time that the pandits composed a new Shaiva literature in Persian verse. The classical Persian *gazal* became the ode to Shiva, Lord of the La Makan, Spaceless Space. The technical vocabulary of Erfan suited their purposes perfectly, and morning prayers were conducted in a Persian which listening neighbours could not distinguish from songs of the "Orafa". Whatever position they won for themselves in India when forced out of Kashmir by Persian-speaking invaders, the pandit emigrés continued to compose their Persian Shaiva odes. The second volume of *The Way of the Swan* will include an anthology of these odes. Two volumes of Brahman poetry of high quality as Persian and Urdu verse are published in an anthology, *Bahar-e-Golshan-e-Kashmir*, and there are independent *diwans* in a fresher language than much of the Persian poetry of the period, which had come to cater rather exclusively to royal courts from Kashmir to Constantinople. The pandits were enthusiastic to have cultivated so excellent a medium for a neo-Shaiva literature, and

their enthusiasm restored to Persian poetry some of the glow it had lost in the imitative era of the poets laureate.

Kashmir had met invasion by poetry more than once. When a new kind of invasion created a new set of problems, poetry still held. The economic policy of keeping India a producer of raw materials for industries overseas invested the feudal landed class with a new importance and undermined the village as a self-contained unit and seat of culture. Feudalism was not left to follow its normal course of disintegration as in Europe, where the wars of the Reformation had been formally fought and religion could not be confused with the issue. Artificially supported, the feudal landlord assumed to himself the role of defender of orthodoxy and aided his foreign supporters, in various parts of India, in playing one form of orthodoxy against another.

The Kashmir *sadhana* had entered a Golden Age of poetic renaissance in the nineteenth century. Jia Lal Kaul in his critical essays attributes the new element of joyous abandon in Kashmiri poetry to the inspiration it received from the *Krishna Lila*. The *Upanishads* in the beautiful Persian translation of Dara Shiko, from which Schopenhauer in the Latin version derived the "solace of his life", had become household reading. The *Mahabharata* in Persian, and a whole literature of Kashmiri adaptations from the Persian classics represented the completed *sadhana*, the mature poise of a Kashmir culture woven from the Shaiva and Islamic backgrounds. The two streams had been in a sacred dialogue from the fourteenth century, the allegro of the Kashmir Sonata opening in the songs of Nuru'd-din, the rondo rising to the nineteenth century's merging of Jalalu'd-din Rumi and the *Krishna Lila*. Feudalism failed to undermine the majestic Sonata. The craftsman and artisan fell to the status of indentured labour, but in one place it was Hindus who were the landlords, in another, Muslims exploited Muslims. "Milk relatives" suffered together.

European travellers at the beginning of the twentieth century report the conditions under which Kashmir's beautiful

textiles and embroideries had come to be produced. The pathos of the situation became the theme of twentieth century literature. Poets mourning the fall of the village prepared the movement of New Kashmir, and when propaganda from British India attempted to introduce the confusion with religious issues which had been successful elsewhere, poetry came to the rescue. Mahjur sang the meaning of Kashmir's beauty to freedom of the spirit and the obligation it imposed to save the long-suffering villager from further exploitation. Zinda Kaul accused the books and priests of polluting the stream of religion, a pure stream, born on the heights, of many snow-born streams. In this latest of Kashmir literature there reappears, in terms of a twentieth century humanism, the original ideal of *Kashmira Mandala* where the Gods all built their summer *ashrams* to teach the cults of the plains to live harmoniously together. It no more occurs to the sophisticated Jia Lal Kaul, in his sensitive English rendering of Ghalib[34] that he is a Brahman translating a Muslim than to the Kashmiri village Brahman that the *Mahabharata* can be read in any language but Urdu, or that there is anything strange in his habit of reading Sanskrit prayers in the Persian script.

Kalhana's statement at the beginning of the *Rajatarangini* that the mountains of Kashmir raised their arms to give refuge to the Nagas commemorates a spiritual, if not a critically historical event, the consecration of Kashmir as sanctuary of what the race first held dear. The Indo-Iranian myth of the genesis of the mountains is that the earth, in a tremble of horror, raised them as a protective rampart against the demoniac invasion, investing them with sacral glory and the radiance of theophany that the dawns might illumine their summits and the immortals speak in their forests. The sacred lake in which the prophetic glory awaits the promised saviour, the maiden, shining and immaculate, who guards the source of the waters of life were remembered in Kashmir as the hidden lake of the

[34] *Interpretations of Ghalib* by Jia Lal Kaul, Delhi, 1957, Atma Ram & Sons.

Guardian of Eternity and the source of the transfiguring Vitasta. The *Bodhi* religion of the Nagas had been the wisdom religion of humanity.

Kashmir, as sanctuary of the concept, endured many sacrifices for the unity its Rishis taught. In the transformation of Vedic Rishi to Islamic Rishi, complete with power over the waters and the integrity which makes the word create, the birth of the world from the waters retains its original meaning. Sanctuary of the waters, meeting place of religions, harmoniser of philosophies and tribes, *Kashmira Mandala* is emblem of re-union, both of the race in its branches and with the *self* which appears to each individual on the Mountain of Dawns.

"I am He", the Way of the Swan (page 45) sounds not only from the poems which strive to explain the way of the great union in terms of the Shaiva philosophy or Erfan. The folk music of Kashmir is union with Kashmir itself, a music which comes directly from waters and the open air, from the movements of the Himalayas, in rhythms of pure contour rising to snow-lit peaks or the changing outlines of forests drowned in light. It is the music of those who cross the heights with no instruments but their voices, while city musicians labour with techniques below. The *lol*, the moment of exquisite nostalgy unencumbered by rules of prosody, sounds on the lakes and waterways where Kashmiris in the moonlight wander for the pleasure of wandering. The *mersiyya* for Imam Hosein is heard among the iris flowers in the mountain graveyards not as a dirge or lamentation, but as a celestial lullaby to every soul's best loved. Violets in the snow, daffodils and hyacinths, rose trees which throw their branches over the streams, balsam which follows the cascades to higher meadows are the flower song of the seasons which the Kashmiri hears and repeats in melodies ever recurring, as the pilgrims return with the year. The *lol*, the dirge, the marriage song, the work song and invocation are Kashmir's Way of the Swan, the cry, "I am Kashmir!" for a people entrusted with an eternal ideal.

Whatever came of poetry entered the Kashmir ecstasy.

The reed flute of Jalalu'd-din Rumi retells its story of separation from the reed-bed in the language of the Sindh Valley waters. The "no Hindu-Muslim" lyrics sung in the gatherings in which Kashmiris still induce group ecstasy through music relive the confessions of the *Diwan-e-Shams-e-Tabriz*, of Ibnu'l Farid of Egypt, Nizami Ganjavi, Ismet of Bokhara, Muhiyu'd-din ibn Arabi of Andalusia, Hafez of Shiraz and the many others who exalted the Magian Temple and Christian Monastery, shrines of their favourite infidels, to shrines of the Universal. Kashmiri versions of the Magian Temple and Christian Monastery passages of the Persian and Arab poets are rapturously enjoyed in the gatherings of today and are on the lips of every minstrel. Not in imitating Persian and Arabic poetry, but in reliving it, Kashmir made Erfan its own, until in the nineteenth century it bloomed in the open blossom of village culture. Paramananda, seer of the century, had no formal education beyond what the Persian classics and oral lore of India gave the usual Brahman household. Persian, not Sanskrit, was the literary language the average Kashmiri Brahman could best read.

Paramananda was village accountant at the foot of the mountain range which ascends to Amarnath, goal of the pilgrims who came walking from the far corners of India. In the language of the earth and labour around him, village Kashmiri, he quoted Jalalu'd-din Rumi to tell what the *Krishna Lila* means to the monistic vision of Kashmir and the Body of Vishnu with its seven divine lotuses to the wandering pilgrim. It was an experience ever renewed, relived by every pilgrim, that India is one, as the Spirit is one. It had been the Song of Songs of the *Tantra*. The Maylaya breeze and sugar-cane, the banyan tree and peacock, flowers and poems not of Kashmir, modes of music, motifs of temple sculpture had been drawn to the monistic vision of its *Tantra*. The Bengal and Kerala branches of the *Agama* literature met in Kashmir as Chorus of the divine love-play which it was its particular privilege, as goal of the pilgrim, to embody. In the morning

dance, the *tandava* of the Lord brings forth the Himalaya from the ocean. In the evening, the lonely Dancer of Chidambaram, transcending while pervading the souls which love Him, dances alone. At noon, on the three peaks of Kashmir, He dances the *tandava* of the zenith, the simultaneity of eternity and metamorphosis, in which the world is born from the waters and the boat of the Goddess of Kashmir, holding the seeds of future things, emerges from the waters of peace and bliss. From Abhinava Gupta, who wrote of the Dance in technical Sanskrit to Paramananda, who made Kashmiri reveal the secrets of the *Amarnath Yatra*, the North and South of India celebrate the Way of the Swan in the circle of the Himalaya and the Nilgiri. Kashmir's role was to enrich it further with the rapture of Erfan.

Shah Hamadan had brought a poem which served as commentary to Lalla's *Way of the Swan*, Ibnu'l Farid's ode to the wine we drank before creation of the vine.[35] Erfan had its own return of the world to the waters, its souls reborn in the Ocean of Sound. To hear the voice of the "Thou" or "He" who is Al Baqa, the Lasting, the dervish in the *sama'*, the "Hearing", counterpart of the Shiva *tandava* which Lalla danced in ecstatic abandon, passes away from the "I:" *Al Baqa ba'd Al Fana*. The object of *sama'* and *tandava*, closely related forms of the ecstatic dance, was union with the "Thou" which drinks the pre-eternal wine.

When the Sheikh Sana of the Kashmiri Muslim poet, Wahab Khar (p. 71) tells his beads to the name of Rama, and the Christian girl of Attar's tale reappears as an Indian girl, when the Hindu poet Zinda Kaul invokes "that moth, Mansur" and the stone in Mecca's ancient wall, six hundred years of songs and singers explain Kashmir's Way of the Swan.

[35] *Risalat Mashareb Il Adwaq*, Sayyed Ali Hamadani's unpublished commentary on *Qasidah Mimiyya* of Ibnu'l Farid of Egypt, Malek Library, Teheran, Mir Sayyed Ali collection No. 1.

[illegible] the ocean at the [illegible] brings forth the Himalaya from the ocean. In the evening, the lonely Dancer of Chidambaram, [illegible], while [illegible] free the souls which love Him, [illegible] Alone, on the three peaks of [illegible]. He [illegible] the [illegible] of the south, the [illegible] of eternity [illegible] which the world is born from the waters [illegible] holding the seeds of future things, emerge from the waters of [illegible], and [illegible] Abhinava Gupta, who [illegible] of the Dance of [illegible] [illegible], who [illegible] the [illegible] north and south of India [illegible] of the Himalayas [illegible] with the rhythm of [illegible].

[illegible] which [illegible] the [illegible] in the [illegible] of the [illegible] and its [illegible] of the waters, the [illegible] of the [illegible], or "He [illegible]" the [illegible] of the Shiva [illegible] which [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible].

[illegible]

[illegible]

The Way of the Swan

Whether He be He, or He, or He !

LALLA[1]

I, Lalla, went forth hoping I would grow
And blossom like the flower of the cotton,
Nor are the carder's nor the weaver's blow,
Nor dashing on the washing stone forgotten,
Nor how the tailor's scissors made me know
The way which is the highest way to go.

If Shiva or Keshava be His name,
Or if He be the Lord, the lotus-born,
Or if the form of Jina He had worn,
Whatever name to me would be the same
If He but take the world's disease from me,
Sick woman that I am, if He be He,
Or He, or He, or He, or He, or He !

Yea, Thou alone the heavens, Thou the earth,
And Thou alone the day, the air, the night,
And Thou alone the slumbering and rebirth,
The offerings of sandal oil and light !
Yea, Thou alone all these, for Thou art all,
What, then, to offer Thee, what name to call ?

A temple and an idol are but stone,
O learned Pandit, what do you adore ?
And all, from head to foot are of the one
Same stuff. For worship is required no more
Than vital airs brought to the will alone.

[1] Selections based upon Kashmiri texts and English prose translations of George Grierson's *Lalla Vakyani*.

Yes, I, Lalla, set out with burning longing,
And seeking,searching,passed the day and night,
Till lo ! I saw to mine own house belonging
A seer, and seized my luck and star of light.

By wandering from place to holy place
In robes of saffron do you not perceive
That you but wander seeking your own face ?
But meditate, my soul, nor disbelieve !
The further from yourself the goal is seen
The distant grass will be the brighter green.

Yes, meditate upon the self, the rare
And priceless knowledge, yet search not afar,
But of your vain imaginings beware,
For when of false desire your will is purged,
A freedom in a freedom shall have merged.

Transcendent, non-transcendent, word nor mind
Are there, nor by the vow of silence find
Admission, nor by postures nor by prayer,
Nor Shiva nor His Shakti dwelling there !
If something there remains which nothing reaches,
That alone is what the doctrine teaches.

Although they be asleep, some are awake,
And others, though awake, asleep remain,
Some bathe in sacred pools but stay unclean,
And there are those who though no world forsake
Detached remain, and chains of action break.

The one whose mind has slumbered, who is he ?
And who is he whose being is awake ?
The offering to God, what may it be ?
And what the ever self-depleting lake ?
The mind, left on the stream of sleep to drift

Awakens when the chains of bondage break,
Discernment of the self—the sacred gift,
The organs five, the self-depleting lake.
And what the realm supreme, the highest grace?
Alone the Spirit-Shiva to embrace!

To hold a mustard seed it is too small,
Yet from that lake all living creatures drink,
And into it gazelles and jackals fall,
Sea elephants, rhinoceroses sink.
Almost before they know that they are born,
They fall, nor know what forms they may have worn.

He only who has known that he is one
With every other but for change of name,
Who sees but one, will be the one alone
To find the God Supreme! For him the sun
Of joy and night of sorrow are the same.

My Guru said, "But one thing you must know,
How, from within, still farther in to go!"
The words became my precept and my chance,
And so it came I, Lalla, naked dance.[2]

Yes, let him hurl abuse at me or blame me,
Or worship me with offerings of his soul,
Let whoso chooses praise me or defame me,
Who profits from the praise or names they call?

But water in a basket borne is fame,
For if some mighty champion should succeed
In grasping in his fist the roaming air
And holding down the wind, or should he tame
An elephant and bind him with a hair,

[2] The ecstatic *Shiva tandava.*

He could retain, alone for such a deed,
His high repute and his exalted name.

To cool a raging fire, to stop a stream,
To walk across the sky with one's two feet,
To milk a wooden cow, though it may seem
A wondrous show is but a juggler's feat.

Arise, O housewife, and your offerings make!
And carry forth your wine and meat and cake,
But if the syllable you were to name
Which is, itself, the shrine of the Supreme,[3]
You then would know that it is all the same
If custom you should keep or custom break.

Into this universe of birth I came,
By yoga gained the self-revealing light.
Whoever dies, to me it is the same,
To him, if I should die, nor day nor night.
The day I die would be a happy day,
And happy it would be if long I stay.

My horse of thought goes racing through the sky,
A hundred thousand leagues the chariot steals
Within a single twinkling of the eye.
The wise man knows the way to check the wheels
By mastery of breath, then, by the force
Of self to hold the bridle of the horse.

By mastering the power within my breath
My way through six dense forests I have cut!
The world without me passed away in death,
And all the doors but that of love I shut.
Within me, then, awakened, rose the moon,

[3] Om.

My heart I parched as farmers parch the grain,
And from that fire there came a wondrous boon,
And Shiva in a flash I did obtain.

Yes, He it is Who laughs and coughs and yawns,
He, the ascetic naked all the year,
Who bathes in sacred pools in all the dawns,
But recognise how He to you is near!

A royal chariot, fly-whisk, throne of might,
Or which of all the pleasures you hold dear,
The festivals, the theatre's delight
Will last, or save you from the death you fear?

Ah, restless mind, O heart, be not afraid!
For He-Who-has-no-source for you will care
And ponder how your hunger may be stayed,
So cry to Him alone salvation's prayer.

Songs of the Pralaya

The Return of the World to the Waters

LALLA

The soul is ever new, the moon is new,
The waste of waters I saw new and new!
Since body, mind, I scoured through and through,
I, Lalla, too, am ever new and new.

I saw a river for a moment flow,
A moment saw no bridge across it goes,
A moment saw a bush in flowers glow,
And for a moment saw nor thorn nor rose.

However many times I drank that wine,
The water of the Sindh, what forms were mine,
Or what the parts upon the stage I played,
Are what to me? Still, that same Lal I stayed!

Three times do I remember having seen
The (partial) overflowing of a lake,
And once I saw a bridge which joined the peak
Of Haramukh to Kausar. There had been
A time that all but one place was destroyed,
And seven times I saw the world a void.[1]

[1] Lalla remembers three partial dissolutions of the universe and one total return to the Waters in the Mahapralaya, the Dissolution of Grace. She remembers a bridge across the vale as the Lake of Sati, and the seven cycles in which it became Kashmir.

When, by the practice,[2] over and again,
The whole vast universe in ether merged,
And when the ether and the naught converged,
The grace of Good was all that could remain :
The only doctrine, Brahman, it is plain.

Yea, when the sun had vanished came the moon,
And when the moon had disappeared, the mind,
When mind had left, then naught remained behind,
For ether, earth and heaven all had gone.

Whoso has by his own experience gained
The wisdom light, the self composed of bliss
And spirit, has attained the true release
While living, while the ignorant fool remained
To add to the continuous, tangled net
Of births and deaths by hundreds, knot on knot.

God of the dark blue throat,[3] both Thou and I
Possess the six, but fallen in discord
Am I, estranged from Thee and far away !
Though Thou and I are one, yet Thou art Lord
Of six, while I by six was led astray.

My soul, I weep for you and gently weep,
Who love a world appearances beget.
Alas ! Why will you your true self forget ?
How shadow of your iron anchor keep ?

Yea, slowly how to stop my breath I learned,
To hold it in the bellows pipe ! And then

[2] The pralaya as an experience of Yoga.

[3] Kashmiri : Shyama-gala, Shiva Nila-Kantha, whose throat is blue from swallowing the poison which arose when the gods and demons churned the ocean for the nectar of immortality.

The lamp blazed up and breath to fire was turned
And my true nature shone forth from within.
I then could send abroad my inner light,
Yet hold to it, however dark the night.

Because you have destroyed the high-banked road
These marshes of the darkness came to be.
Arise and climb, yea, pierce the sun's abode !
The fear of death away from you will flee.

Your body in a robe of knowledge dress,
Brand on your heart what Lalla spoke in verse,
For Lalla was absorbed, by help of breath
In union with the light which conquers death.

In ruling kingdoms, there is no relief,
In giving them away, there yet is grief,
The spirit which is from attachment free
Will never die ! If while alive it die,
In that alone true knowledge it will see.

O Lord, I have not known myself, nor yet
Known other than myself ! That I am Thou,
That Thou art I, and that in one these two
Are joined, I did not know. Yea, it is doubt
To question,"Who am I ?" and ask,"Thou who?"

In seeking me and Thee I passed the day.
Absorbed within Thyself Thou hadst remained
Concealed from me ! I wandered far away.
When I beheld Thee in myself, I gained
For Thee and me that rapture unrestrained.

Shiva ! Shiva ! the one who ever calls,
The Way which is the Swan's[4] ever recalls,
Though night and day his worldly calling meet,
Non-dualist and seeking no reward,
In everlasting graciousness the Lord
Of the great Guru of the Gods will greet.

[4] *The Way of the Swan.* The formula formed by transposition of the letters *ham-sah*, the swan, to *So-ham*, "I am He".

The Lord of Spaceless Space

NURU'D-DIN, PIR-E-RISHIYAN

The lover is the one in whom desire
Has melted self to shine like heated gold.
The heart, transfigured by this radiant fire
In spacelessness the whole of space will hold.

The Prince of Chivalry

Sultan Zeinu'l-abadin[1]

SHRIVARA PANDIT[2]

"The six schools of philosophy which delight the learned delighted his heart, as the six seasons, delighting men with flowers, adorn the garden of Indra. Artists considered him Vishvakarma[3] descended to earth, yogis regarded him as *Gorakha*,[4] chemists looked upon him as Nagarjuna. He spent his life listening to poems and songs, in watching the dance and hearing the music of the harp, and in the theatre. He commanded those who knew the Shastras to remain true to their religious duties, for the works of those who follow the Shastras are just."

[By making everyone practice his own religion, the great hearted Jainollabadina checked the oppression of the tax-collectors.]

"No one could exact even five grains of rice from a pious householder engaged in prayer."

[The wicked tax collectors had made their exactions in the name of the Musula (Muslim) religion.]

"They were driven now to live like insects in the woods and in far away places, for the King knew everything about his subjects but their dreams."

"He chained the feet of the *chāndāla* thieves who should have lived by agriculture and made them work on the land.

[1] Reigned in Kashmir 1420-70 A.D.

[2] From the *Jainatarangini*, a history in Sanskrit verse by Shrivara. Based upon selections from *op. cit.* Introduction Note (2), J. C. Dutt.

[3] Architect of the Gods.

[4] Gorakha, originator of the *Gorakhpanth* school of Hatha-Yoga.

Knowing that unemployment makes low caste men into thieves, he took care of their needs."

[High caste thieves he exiled. He confiscated the estates of corrupt officials and giving them reasonable pensions, kept them on the other side of the mountain walls.]

"The annoyance from thieves being thus suppressed by the prudence of the King, travellers slept in the woods in as great security as behind locked doors.

"If the King be a sea of learning and lover of merit, the people become so, too. The sound of the voices of students studying logic and grammar arose from the hostels he built for them. The King provided books, teachers, food and money, and broadened the limits of learning in all its branches. He esteemed learned men and valued them for their accomplishments above all the products of the realm.

"The heat of the earth consumes much of the grass and many of the shrubs of summer, but the pleasant rains revive them. Thus, in times past, King Shekendhara[5] had, through the influence of outsiders, burnt all learned books, even as fire destroys the green of the grass. At that time, learned men had fled to distant lands because of the oppression of the Musulas, taking their books along with them. What more need be said ? There were Brahmans in the country, but their excellent books were known only in name, as lotuses at the advent of winter. But the King who now graces the land and is dear to the learned restored the books, even as the spring revives the black bees. He had the *Puranas*, the books on logic, the *Mimamsa* and other texts brought from distant regions and distributed them among scholars.

"The King heard me recite the *Vashishta Brahmadarshana* composed by Valmiki, which is known as a way to salvation. When he heard the annotations, pervaded by a feeling of peace, he remembered them even in his dreams, as a lover remembers the gestures of a beloved. Maintaining that a man

[5] Iskender the Iconoclast, father of Zeinu'l-abadin.

can be taught only in his mother tongue, the King had translations made by those who knew Sanskrit, Kashmiri and Persian. Even outsiders can comprehend minerology, chemistry and ethics if studied in their own language. He had the *Dashavatara* and *Rajatarangini*, the Sanskrit Book of Kings, translated into Persian. Likewise, he enabled the Mlechchas to read the *Vrihatkathasara*, the *Haptakeshvara Samhita*, the *Puranas* and other books in their own language.

"Pandit Uttha Soma, versed in Kashmiri and Sanskrit literature, composed a *Life of Jaina* in Kashmiri and was close to the King. Yodha Bhatta, a poet in Kashmiri, composed a drama, clear as a mirror, called the *Jaina Prakasha*, in which he gave his biography. Bhattavatara, who had studied the *Shahnamah*, vast as the sea, composed a work called *Jaina Vilasa*, as the counterpart of the King's own books of 'Instructions'. The King was delighted, and had the lute, the gourd instrument, the *ravana* and all the other musical instruments inlaid with gold, silver and jewels, and they looked very beautiful. When the people saw the stage, shining with decorations, and watched the play, distinguished for the sense it made, for its style and feeling, they called the theatre a four-faced divinity.

"The King paid the travelling expenses of those of his subjects who came to see the performance and they were happy to be clothed by him in silken robes of honour. (When the drama festival was held in other towns), he visited the houses and gardens of the people, saw his own boat filled with flowers, and after praising the citizens, went back home to his capital.

"In the year 36 there was a famine, caused by snow in midsummer, and because, I think, the Kashmiris had taken their bountiful rice for granted and had not been thankful enough for what had been lavished upon them. And in the year 38, there was the dust-rain which wrought destruction. The sixty four branches of learning, art, science and progress remained dormant in the distress caused by the famine.

Neither new books to show off the play of words and sentences, nor the arts of singing, music and the dance, nor women skilful in the arts of love delight the hungry.

"It was the sea which afflicted the earth in this fashion, by not giving water to the clouds, in order to display the King's humanity and skill in irrigation engineering. Thieves delight in periods of anarchy, unchaste women in the hours of darkness, and grain sellers in famine. People had paid for grain in their hunger with precious things, but when the famine was over the King required adjustments to be made at the proper prices and cancelled the written deeds drawn up between creditors and debtors."

[The worst disaster of all, a flood, made him take to "excavating and consecrating rivers."]

"The rivers rose in a quarrel with one another and drowned the villages on their banks in their fury. The waters became ungovernable. They brought down what was high and threw up what was low. Who taught them to lift the earth from the foot of the hills and to tear down mighty trees? They swept away men and cows and creatures, terrible as a host of Mlechchas. The King was overwhelmed with sorrow for the people and set out in a boat. He wandered over the floods, and when he saw the fields and their blooming crops drowned under water, sorrow made him weak.

"Guided by his own intelligence, he excavated new rivers in the land for the benefit of others and led them by various courses. Everywhere store-houses, high as hills, came to be seen, filled with rice grown on newly laid out fields. These granaries were, indeed, like breasts of earth from which the people were nourished, day by day. The King grew crops on lands which could with difficulty be reclaimed, or which had seldom yielded crops before because of calamities.

"Apprehending the recurrence of such a calamity (the flood), the King searched to find an elevated site for a new city. On the high banks of the Vitasta near Jayapidapura he built Jainatilaka, and the moonlight rested on its pure white walls,

as though the Goddess of the capital lingered there to see the King. The beautiful water of the river surrounded the city and flowed past its dazzling white gate. Here, the King on his birthday gave honours to those he loved and showered gold from the courtyard of the palace, where all the songs of Kashmira and the Kashya countries were sung. Every year on the day of Naga Yatra and during the feast of Ganachakra, the King fed the Sadhus for five days. He built tanks and filled them with wine, cream and curry. There was no kind of rice or fruit or food with which he did not feed the people at the time of these feasts. The sound of the conch horns of a thousand Sadhus made even the Nagas of the Manasa lake shut their eyes.

"Out of reverence for the Sadhus, the King put up with their indecorous behaviour under the influence of wine, which ordinary men could not have endured. On the eleventh day of the moon he dismissed them, after having laden them with quilts, money and walking sticks."

[The granaries established, and a new secretariat with "rows of government offices on high ground", King Shri Jaina built himself a new palace and filled the lakes around it with swans.]

"The Gods do not live in Amaravati, (the City of Paradise) but wander about in aerial chariots. King Jaina took up residence in the new palace in the year 40 and lived there until the end of his life. It was near the high palace[6] which had been built on the Devaguha hill in the year 15, and the bright and beautiful golden dome which crowned it was like a lotus thrown down by the illustrious Indra. The swans in its lakes drew near to the singers as they sang, attracted by the sweetness of their voices, and praised their songs with their own. Within

[6] *Rajdan*, "twelve storeys high, some of which contained fifty rooms, halls and corridors, the whole of this high structure built of wood." Mirza Haidar Dughlat, in *Tarikhi Rashidi* (*op. cit.* p. 429) adds that in Tabriz, Herat and Samarkand there was no such structure. Of the houses in Kashmir, "most of which are at least five storeys high," he says, "the beauty of their exterior defies description. All who see them for the first time bite the finger of astonishment with the teeth of admiration."

this palace was the audience hall, adorned with the three-cornered throne, its walls inlaid with crystal. There were many columns of victory, and the morning breeze blew sweetly.

"The King, possessed of the three cardinal virtues, spent the three watches of the night watching the three kinds of dance. He visited houses bedecked with jasmine flowers and full of gaiety and laughter, and drank from stainless cups.

"One Mallajadaka came from Khorasan and received inestimable favours from the King by playing on a lute made of tortoise shell. Another, named Mallajyamala, a singer in the Mlechcha languages, pleased the King even as Narada pleases Indra. I, who am versed in all kinds of song, displayed my skill in a new mode with endless variations, and Japbarana and the others sang with me the difficult Turushka (Tauranian-Turkish) meters. We sang songs in twelve different modes in the court, and as the sound arose from the strings, our voices accorded in harmonious joy.

"At the Chaitra (Spring New Year) festival, the King set out in a boat to enjoy the games of flowers. The procession of his boats on the Vitasta looked like the rows of Indra's chariots on the Milky Way. Setting out from Avantipura, the procession stopped along the way to watch the dancing on the stages above the river."

[The Gods had not only taken note of his straight life and good works, but joined King Shri Jaina when he went to the theatre.]

"The scene was indeed beautiful. The stage was like a garden, and the lamps on it like rows of champaka flowers, surrounded with men intoxicated with wine, like bees surrounding flowers. Rows of lamps surrounded the King, as though the Gods, pleased with his government, had come to watch the dance and had thrown a garland of golden lotuses around him. Where the rows of lamps were reflected in the water, it was as though the Lord of Ocean had illumined the court of the King with lights from the Naga world.

"The renowned Tara and her troupe sang songs to every kind of music, and the singer Utsava, who was lovely to the eyes as the bow of Kama, was proficient in both the fast and slow styles of dancing and enchanted everyone. The actresses, in their interpretation of the forty nine emotions, were like the ascending and descending scales of the musical modes. The actors were learned and dignified and showed their taste and education on the stage. Both actors and spectators knew rhetoric, literature and philosophy. Young women proficient in music, possessed of sweet voices and a genuine ardour for song graced the surroundings.

"The King was skilled in the manufacture of fireworks and he taught Habhaba (Habib) to display them. It had been difficult to obtain powder before, but the King showed how it was made and it became easily obtainable. He gave his instructions to Habhaba in Persian, in the form of questions and answers, and many others began to write books after this example.

"Fireworks of various colours, made by the mixture of charcoal and saltpetre delighted the spectators at the theatre. Tubes were filled and the thick sparks of fire which issued from them looked like creepers of gold. The audience was filled with wonder to see flames emerge from the water like Nagas. Balls of fire rose from the tubes to the sky, beautiful as silver and resembling Jupiter and Venus. A tube filled with saltpetre was tied to a string. It went off to a distance in flame and returned, in flame, when pulled. Such flames blazed from the King and returned to him like brilliant shooting stars. The flaming tubes were held by the actresses in their hands and shone like stars of beautiful colours falling from heaven.

"The King brought mechanics who designed different kinds of thunder weapons[7] which make men tremble with their

[7] Babur is credited with having introduced artillery to India at the Battle of Panipat, 1524. Zeinu'l-abadin's contacts with China and Central Asia gave him gunpowder and "mechanics" nearly a century earlier.

roaring sound. He made them of different metals, new and hard, and at his command I composed the following verses in praise of them :

> 'In the year 41, the King, Shri Jainollabadina, the victorious, the ruler of Kashmira, built this weapon which is well known to the world and is mentioned in the Musula language. It destroys forts, pierces the hearts of men, strikes horses with terror, remaining unseen by the soldiers from encampments. The engine will be as useful to the King as a new city, for the large number of different metals which compose it, by its build and range and sound.'

"The engines, challenging the thunder, were inscribed with these lines and looked graceful.

"The King conquered Sindhu and Himavat, and his fame spread over Bangala, Malwa, Ganda and Karnata."

[For all the value of the thunder weapons, the chief utility of the new explosives was in giving magnificence to the Hindu festivals.]

"On the Birthday of the River Vitasta, the King set out on the water to see the lamps offered in worship to the river. Embarking in his boat, he accepted the blessings of the citizens, and while on the water, listened to well composed songs. The lamps offered by the citizens to the river were as though the spirits of numberless holy places had come to the Vitasta for adoration. At the ferry landings, the lamps on the two shores made it seem that the Gods had scattered beautiful golden flowers for the worship of the Vitasta. The moon, reflected on the river, was humbled by the lovely faces of the wives of the citizens, who had come to offer lamps and to worship. The King spent the whole night on the river in the delight of songs.

"From town to town, he gave himself up to good works and enjoyment. The sons of his nurse, however, whom he had

elevated to position and fortune, became, like unchecked elephants, the destroyers of his joys. Inflated with pride, they corrupted his sons with ambition and stirred up rivalry among them. The eldest, Merathakura, who had become a Musula, became a judge and won fame by literary work. The others incited a plot for the overthrow of the King and the ministers of the rebel sons proposed a compromise.

" 'Who could, with a cocoanut shell, cover the radiant sun in the sky ? The King is just. He is attached to the doctrine of Nirvana, and is equally versed in all the Shastras. Let him rule over the inside of the country and we will rule over the outside.' "

[Against his eldest son, Adam Khan, the King was finally forced to go to war. The wicked boy had refused to study.]

"He was addicted to hunting and amused himself with dogs. Night was as day to him, but what need be said of the meanness of one whose servants went through the towns selling feathers of birds killed by hawks ? The countryside resounded with the cries of villagers whenever that sinful one passed. His passing was marked by confiscation of lands which had been granted in return for services, although the title deeds were clear. The covetous Adamakhana plundered the people of their belongings, in some places by the usual methods, and in others by threats, craft and deception. His servants oppressed modest women with insulting proposals, and, as they were refused, took vengeance upon the villagers, carefully avoiding the law courts. These servants drank wine in fish-pots in the wine shops and when they were drunk blew earthen pots like clowns and exacted enhanced rents. What more need I tell of their unlawful acts ? The King was so distressed upon hearing of these deeds that he could not leave his house for sorrow.

"From the *Adi Puranam*,[8] the King heard of the advantages

[8] *Nilamata Puranam.*

of making the pilgrimage to the peaks of *Naubandhanam*,[9] and reached Vijayeshvara on the last day of the fortnight of offerings to ancestral spirits, in the year 39. He saw the ground covered with spectators in clothes of many colours, like a garden of flowers. The sky was beautiful with Venus and Mercury and the stars by night, and the ground was graced by poets and learned men and rows of lamps, so that earth and sky vied with one another. Someone carried a tree of lamps which looked like the Pleiades risen among the stars. The King reached Durmarga on foot in three days. Noble in his piety, he saw Vishnu's footprint at the Kurma[10] Lake and experienced the joy of bowing at the feet of Vishnu.

"The waters from the peaks of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara seemed by their sound to be asking of the welfare of the King, who was a part of Mahadeva. He saw the earth and mountains darkened by flowers of the Kasturi and felt the joy that hermits feel when they see the longed-for person of Narayana.

"And then he embarked on a boat and went about the lake, supporting himself on me and Simha Bhatta. He heard from me the songs of the Gita Govinda and there arose in his soul a feeling of reverence for Govinda. The sweet sound of our songs was echoed from the forests, as though celestial musicians sang after us from the trees. And when we had wandered for a long time on the lake, snow began to fall, as though the Gods showered flowers on him. The encircling snow might have been a part of that Kailasha which pilgrimage attains. The King made the circle of the lake three times, from piety, as also to test his powers.

" '*When the boat was tied*', the Naubandhanam became what its name implies, and he saw the mountain and went to it. When he reached the Sukumara Lake and drank its water and

[9] The three sacred peaks, to which the Ark of the Goddess was tied with the seeds of all beautiful things when the world of the seventh Manu emerged from the Waters.

[10] "Tortoise" Lake.

meditated upon its shrine, he felt the bliss of attaining to the purity of his soul. He heard the names of holy places, touched the auspicious waters of the consecrated shrines, tasted the cold water, saw the beauty of the forest trees, breathed the perfume of plants and flowers, and thus performed the pilgrimage which gives delight to the senses and returned to his capital again.

"To satisfy his longing, after that, for the Kurma Lake, the King had a new lake excavated within the Padmapura (Wular), and called it the Jaina Lake. It was autumn, and the earth was darkened by the full-blown flower of the saffron, as though the dark-gleaming waters of the Jumna had come to join this lake in rapture. The King built a beautiful palace within it and called it Kuloddharana[11] Naga.

"The King of Panchanada sent him, because of his friendship, his own horse, named Tajika. The horse-faced singer of heaven is celebrated for his voice, but does not know how to dance. Tajika, remembering this, proudly danced on the road when King Shri Jaina rode him. He considered himself as great as the King and needed no chastisement.

"Tugarasaha, the beloved King of Gopalapura, sent the King for the Festival of Music a book called *Sangitachudamani*, containing the rules of singing, of the fine arts and acting, as well as a collection of the best songs.

"Valluka,[12] the King of Delhi, though blood-thirsty and restless in his work of destruction, was bound to the King like a tame deer because of his virtue. Someone presented the King with a pair of swans, and other swans were born of them. He was overjoyed. They floated on the lake like white lotuses agitated by waves. The King of Khorasana was the lord of horses. His order was held on the head by the kings of the surrounding countries, like a garland of mandara flowers. His servants were armed with fearful weapons. They shook

[11] "Emancipator of the clan."
[12] Bahlol Lodi.

hands with the God of Death and roamed the world. This King of the North, Merjjabho-Saida, sent an accomplished messenger to the King with a present of high horses and mules. Muhammada Suratrana, King of Gurjara, gratified the King with presents of the textiles celebrated by the names of kateha, sohasa and glata. The Kings of Gilana, Mesra (Egypt), Makka (Mecca) and other lands sent various rare presents to the King. Who did not seek to please him, and what artists, possessed of great designs in art, did not come from distant countries, like bees ? "

[Abu'l Fazl adds a number of names[13]] :

> "Under his patronage, many works were translated from the Arabic, Persian, Kashmiri and Sanskrit languages. During his reign, musicians from Persia and Turkestan flocked to his court. Among them was Mulla Uudi, the immediate pupil of the famous Khawja Abdu'l-Kadir, who came from Khorasan, and Mulla Jamil who in singing and painting was pre-eminent among his contemporaries.
>
> Sultan Abu Said Mirza sent him presents of Arab horses and dromedaries from Khorasan, and Bahlol Lodi, King of Delhi and Sultan Mahmud of Gujerat were in friendly alliance with him.
>
> His benevolence and love of his people induced him to abolish the capitation tax (on non-Muslims) and to prohibit the slaughter of cows, as well as to abolish penalties and presents of all kinds. His private revenues were drawn from copper mines. He often personally administered medicinal remedies . . . and it was his fortune to enjoy universal peace."

[Abu'l Fazl adds] :

[13] *Ain-e-Akbari*, Jarret, II, p. 360-1.

"He was regarded by high and low as a special servant of God and venerated as a saint. He was credited with the power of divesting himself of his corporeal form."

[It was as a human being that his close companion, Shrivara, loved Zeinu'l-abadin most. When his wife died, "he felt himself alone in the world" and fell ill grieving for her and the bad conduct of his sons. He listened to the Shastras, but brooded over the death, one by one, of trusted friends. Shrivara's chapter describing his death begins with a gay description of a tight-rope walker's performance. But the elephants knew better. They cried, and a fearful comet appeared in the sky.

Of the name he had earned for Kashmir, and its destiny in uniting tribes and peoples, Shrivara tells in the chapter called "The account of the development of the art of colour and the description of art of *Jainatarangini*"]:

"It was then that the people of Kashmira learnt the art of the weaver's brush and today are weaving precious stuffs of silk. The woollen shawls made in foreign countries and those made in Kashmir today are both beautiful, but those of Kashmir are durable and fit for kings. Other stuffs were woven on which plants were produced by various methods of weaving. Painters saw them and remained dumb with wonder. Both the kingdom and the King's dress of silk were famous as *Khaush-eyaka*, the kingdom because of the various peoples who inhabit it, the dress for the various coloured threads it contained. The King invested his country and his dress with a peculiar beauty, the country graced by its various peoples, the capital by its decorations, its learning and dignity, and the dress made beautiful by its many circular designs and its patterns of men and the Goddess. The country was beautiful and unconquerable, the dress was celebrated for its grace. The silk glittered, and the land was bright with festivities. In the silk was a splendid collection of threads, in the kingdom, good laws and riches."

What Separates Religions?

HABIBULLAH[1]

What separates religions? Tell, O heart,
When faith is one in all, in all the same,
Why one is classed an infidel, apart,
Another called a Muslim, though the name
Is all that differs. Muslims are not made
But by their actions. God to those is guide
Who followed Him, who in their lives obeyed,
To others, He Himself the path denied.
Diversity of faiths and quarrelling creeds
Are not from Him, the Lord of Lords, in Whom
Nor faith nor creeds nor irreligion leads
To doubt or dogma and for none is room.
Yet he alone will know what these words mean,
Habib, who has known God and God has seen.

[1] *Diwan* of Khawja Habibullah Nosheri, Persian Manuscript, Kashmir State Research Department.

Countless His Beautiful Names

HABIBULLAH[1]

O, love, let us go to the festival,
  As the Manifested He came !
The shining forth of the mystery
  As man, and Muhammad his name.

Revealing the inner treasury,
  In splendour He will appear,
Love, let us go to the festival,
  He is nearer than life is near.

I have told His names on my rosary,
  What name of His names shall I call ?
Love, let us go to the festival,
  They are endless, I call on all !

And you, dear bird, my messenger be,
  This sigh of my heart make Him hear,
To the festival, love, O come with me,
  Before Him my heart I would bare.

[1] Kashmiri texts of Habibullah, Aziz Darvesh, Arnimal, Krishna Razdan and Wahab Khar from Jia Lal Kaul's *Kashmiri Lyrics*, with translation guidance from his English versions.

Shiva, Like the Sun, is Everywhere

Habibullah

So deep, so deep my longing, I will keep
My arms a cradle, and when from your sleep
You waken, like a bee rise in the air !
See, Shiva, like the sun, is everywhere,
And I am wounded by love's golden sword.
Wherever love waylaid me, here, or there,
But drink the wine of rapture it has poured !
Whoever reached the Ka'ba came not home,
The vision of the epiphanic light
At every moment comes before his sight,
In spacelessness the Ka'ba he will roam.

Whatever You May Love

HABIBULLAH

Upon the drama of the world I gazed
And saw that wealth is but to find one's love.
The hermit with his cave alone is pleased,
While devotees among the roses roam,
The lover yearns for nothing but his love,
To seek one's love is to have found one's home.

To love I have abandoned all, my soul,
My self, and God is pleased ! To love be true
For sake of love, and I the cup will fill
With wine of life from life's own stream for you!
For *all things from the water We have made.*
Some filled the cup again and yet again,
While others feared to drink and thirsty stayed,
Lost, by despair, what those who hoped attain.

Sanyasi

HABIBULLAH

The inspired wanderer steals away my soul,
His dress of ashes and his body bare,
The Ganges falling from his matted hair,
    The worlds, his goal!
His brow illumined by the sun and stars,
Bell-shaped flowers for his nectar jars,
    The earth, his bowl!

The Joyous Wine

HABIBULLAH

Whoever his true, inner self discovers,
With drunken bliss and rapture overflows !
He, jars and jars of joyous wine uncovers,
And Musalman from Hindu no more knows.

Man, Not Dogma[1]

HABIBULLAH

That both the worlds are drowned in man, I found,
That man, of all, possessed the grandest name.
The name of man and son of man resound
Through both the worlds, the means through
which both came.
What is the world, and what is man ? One being,
With God the inner kernel, man the peel,
And these two interwoven for the seeing,
The ointment with the pain which it would heal.
The world of atoms from His love draws near
To that sweet, inmost vision, and the eyes
Of "those who know" grow more and more aware,
While others see but fail to recognise.
Habib, whoever loved the Seer has known
The son of man can be the Seer alone.

[1] Persian *Diwan* of Habibullah, Ms. *cit.*

No Hindu and No Muslim in that Dawn

AZIZ DARVESH

Hear, O hear, the soul disturbing song
Of spirits singing as the tempest blows,
While waiting by the endless ocean's sands
A hapless throng
Of blind and helpless in the undertows
Weep and wring their hands,
O, hear the song !
And in the storm I see the countless boats
The wind has set adrift, one sinks, one floats,
And I among them, tossed
On unknown depths, a stranger here and lost,
O, lead me on !
I made of mine own self a bridge and crossed
To that far shore beyond, and saw above,
And in a brighter dawn,
No Hindu and no Musalman are there !
The secret, to his fellowmen, of love,
Division gone,
Aziz proclaims, and prays a common prayer.
From saints and sages,"All are one", he learned,
And so Aziz, the mad, the truth discerned.

O, Love, Desert Me Not!

Aziz Darvesh

How full I am, from heaven's overflow,
  O, Love, desert me not!
Yet I allowed the caravan to go
So far ahead, and I remain, distraught.
Shall I not now besmear myself with ash?
  None found Him, though all sought
His endlessness-in-unity, His grace,
  Yet in a single flash
The inner self may gaze upon His face.

The Quest of the Beloved

HABIBULLAH

O spring, new spring !
May grief be gone, the joyous air
Resounds with songs, O heart,weep not, but sing !
The drunken tulips wine-cup colours wear,
O, gather violets, madness dare,
In spring, new spring !

"I have turned pale"
The jasmine to the white rose said,
The daisy comes and goes and leaves a trail
Of lovers longing for her golden head,
The poppy shows where it had bled,
The spring we hail !

But where are you ?
The breath of roses fills all space,
The perfume of the night breathes in the dew,
The hyacinth has shown her lovely face,
The balsams beauty's footsteps trace,
And I seek you !

The Land of Poems[1]

MAHMUD GANI

For just one glimpse of you,
The rosebud of your street
  Has bloomed anew!
No songbird there to greet
Your rose, which blooms alone,
  But in that land
Of poems, where have grown
My roses, and I stand
  Within the shrine
Of secret meanings, hail!
How every verse of mine
  The nightingale
Will sing, and none destroy
The ecstasy we share,
  His house of joy
On heights none others dare.

[1] Persian *Diwan* of Mahmud Gani.

The Angels' Dance

WAHAB KHAR

Love said : I shall create by my own hand
My own beloved, and the Tablet came
And Pen. O, joy ! It wrote by God's command.
And there was Sheikh Sana who on the name
Of Rama told the zikr of his beads,
And loved an Indian girl, confused the creeds
And worshipped idols, caring not for blame.
"I am the Truth", Mansur said, and could find
His love within the shrine of his own mind,
A secret which is difficult to tell.
And since I, too, have tried to glance
Upon the secret of man's being, I kneel,
And lo ! The angels have begun to dance.

The Secret Difficult To Tell

MANSURU'L HALLAJ[1]

O secret, secret of a heart too fine
For any living being to understand!
O manifest, yet hidden, which appears
To everything in everything! To cry
To Thee complaining is but doubt immense
And ignorance, O Thou Who art the All,
The Whole, Who art none other than myself,
Why should I, then, unto myself complain?

And Ahmad ibn Fatik says, further, I heard Hallaj say:
The Truth am I, and yea, the Truth is He,
For when the True One clothes Him in His essence,
What difference, then, between Himself and me?

[1] Quoted by Wahab Khar.
Akhbar Al Hallaj, Louis Massignon, Arabic texts No. 74 and Appendix 4.

Communion Hymn

To the Divine Dancer from Whose Joy All Blooms and Grows[1]

UTPALACHARYA

The two emotions, Lord, may I define,
Which I myself have lived, but with this word :
Communion—joy, and separation, pain.
Thy vision by some mist is still obscured,
A mist of mind ! Remove the mist and shine
In Thy full radiant self upon me, Lord !
Could I uninterruptedly adore
As nectar of pure consciousness my Lord,
For life or death I would no longer care,
O God of Gods, remove the veil which hides
Thy life-bestowing oneness, vision bare
To knowledge which the longing spirit guides !

Through all five senses, adoration's wine
In overflowing cups of all I see
Of good, might I forever drink and be
Divinely drunk, O Lord, with Thee and Thine !
My speech a song of love invoking Thee,
To worship Thee, and this, the love in me,
Of beautiful beloveds take the place,
My mind illumined by Thy light of grace,
In that eternal festival which leads
The Lord Himself to see, then touch, embrace !
The worship which through ecstasy succeeds,

[1] From *Stotravali* of Utpalacharya (Sanskrit). Translated in collaboration with Masterji Zinda Kaul.

The vision that all objects, as they are,
Are but Thyself, the knowledge in the breasts
Of those with whom to know is to adore,
The lovers in whose hearts Thy presence rests.
Could I but make my home within that blest
Abode, there, where Thy radiance fills all space,
And where, beyond, no atom may exist,
And in that land of Thine, Thy House above,
Won by desire alone, could all thought cease,
And I drink deeply of the wine of love,
Beyond all waves of thought attain to peace !

Thou shinest forth and all things live and move,
Thou dancest in the joy which overflows
From Self and all creation laughs and grows,
Thou turnest back within Thyself to send
The whole created world back to repose.
If it were merit which Thou dids't demand,
It then were fair that Thou shoulds't thus delay
The revelation of Thyself to me.
Thy grace on merit never dids't depend !
O, Lord of Uma, home and self of all,
To Whom all things are gathered in the end,
I would but see Thee in the festival
Of objects of the senses and the mind !

The Word, The Goddess of Kashmir

KĀMA KALĀ VILĀSA TANTRA[1]

She is the soul of sound, pure crystal,
The flute, the drum, the conch shell and the cymbal,
She is the silence and the thunder
In which good and bad and merit and demerit are burned and torn asunder.
Sadashiva, Light Itself, appears beyond the thunder,
The soul of power, omnipresent, pure, etherial and blissful!
The gentle one, half moon, the one, who, seen as three,
Three lights, three circles, sun and moon and fire,
O Shivā! [2] makes the worlds to be.
The moon, the nights, the sun, the days,
Fire lights the twilights,
None can know the countless millions of her rays
Whose going forth redeems the worlds from eternal darkness.
The powers and the masters, from the petals of her feet,
Flower as the light divides in many million ways,
In the circle of the lotus, the powers and gurus meet,
The triple light, transcendent, their illumination.

Great Queen, conscious of her own unending dominion,
That she is bliss eternal, immense and boundless might,
Her powers appearing and disappearing like bubbles on the face of the ocean,
Holding the noose, the goad, the sugar-cane bow and the five arrows of flowers,
Enthroned in the lap of Kameshvara, Lord of Desire,

[1] A digest of the fifty-five verses and commentary of Sanskrit text, *Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies*, No. 12.
[2] The feminine form of *Shiva*.

Adored she is by the countless millions of yoginis who are her powers,
Gleaming in the circle-of-energy as waves of a rising ocean.
The resplendent one, adorned with the moon, in the circle-of-the-supreme ether,
The sun and moon and fire her eyes, her body the glow of the sunrise,
The path to the circle-of-bliss, in the realm of the moon, beneath her,
With the noose of will, the goad of knowledge, the bow and arrows of action.

The Shining One, the Deva, seeks the eternal rapture
Of play with her who is beautiful as the Moon of autumn.
Verily, alone, it was not His to capture
The Brahma-bliss of spirit, which was one, divided.
Glowing powers abide in the eight-fold
Etherial body of the Devi,
The powers glow like sunsets in the ecstasy untold
Of the bliss of the experience of completeness.
The sense of imperfection is disease
And source of misery. Self knowledge is the all-disease-destroyer,
The experience of I-ness knowledge of self will seize,
And the self the supreme experience.

Her own form is knowledge in itself, rapture, being and eternity,
In her desire to be many, she moves about in play,
The Brahma-bliss and vision of humanity,
The innermost essence of life and bliss, rapture of self- revelation.
She is the beautiful woman whose amorous play
Appears as the gods and the cosmic circle,
Whose amorous movements alone allay
The longing of the Lord of Creation.
I adore the great centre of the circle, grantor-of-all-desires!
Source of the self-born rays which appear as bodies,
Giver of all prosperity, all-disease .destroyer, fire

Beyond the qualities, the steps of whose lotus feet bring forth
worlds and destroy them !

She, the primordial power, the limitless bliss, is the seed
Of all moving and motionless things which are to be.
When the Lord would create, she fulfills His need
Of experiencing Himself in the pure light of a mirror.
She is the uncreated Brahma-bliss, the Immense,
Which is bliss ! There is no bliss in the little.
Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, knows nothing
else, is the bliss of Brahman.
The One, who is the inner self of all that is to be
Transforms the inner unity to many.
As the great tree, dormant in the seed of the banyan tree,
In the seed of the heart, this universe of movement !
With the urge, in herself, to becoming, the circle comes into
being :
The pure mirror makes manifest the knowledge of I-ness.
"I am he who is thus reflected !" So, the great Shiva, in seeing
His Shakti, knows "I am all", His own nature.

She, the supreme, is resplendent, both the seed and the flower,
As the union of Shiva and Shakti, she is the union of letters,
A, the first of the alphabet, and *ha*, the letter of power,
A-ham, I : "I am all ! " is the worship of Atman.
In the beginning was God, and God was All,
He knew Himself, on the rays of the sun,
Reflected on the mirror of deathlessness, on the chitta-wall
Of intelligence: "All this am I", was His secret meditation.
From Shiva and Shakti is born the Word,
In the secret delight of their meeting,
From the pulse of their love, the Sound unheard
Brings forth the world, like a flower opening and closing.
This is the greatest of secrets : energy unbound
In the Word brings forth the sounds of the Vedas,
Radiant, bodiless, imperishable, creator and destroyer, sound,

The golden energy shaping the worlds, the all-pervader!
The great yogis attain to Him in attainment of self-recollection,
Their object of adoration, Beauty, their goal of desire,
Beyond religion and irreligion, the true perfection,
Beauty, for those who have known the self as the supreme reality.

I bow to the great refuge, the bridal place
Of Mind and Power, from which countless world rays emanate, flashed forth by creative will,
And to the effulgent consciousness, shining in endless space,
From which rays shoot forth which are the worlds, as sparks from a central fire!
Imperishable and indistinguishable as are the moon and the moonbeam
Are Shiva and Shakti, the Light which is Wisdom and Power.
She, who in the world appears possessed of the energy and brilliance of the Supreme
Pervades the whole of this universe, from the earth to Brahma.

The Land of Nila

Rajatarangini

KALHANA

That land was guarded by Nila, the Lord of all the Nagas, whose royal umbrella is the circular spring of the Nilakunda, with the newly risen stream of the Vitasta,[1] its stick.

Learning, high houses, saffron, ice-water and grapes, things which even in heaven are difficult to find, are common there—

In the three worlds the jewel producing earth is best worthy of devotion, on earth the North, in the North the Himalaya, the father of Gauri,[2] and in the Himalaya, the land embraced by the mountains' arms.

[1] The Jhelum River.

[2] Sati, Parvati, the Word, the Goddess of Kashmir.

Whatever exists in whatever Mandala of the earth,
exists in its quintessence in Kashmira,
Whatever exists in Kashmira Mandala, exists within
the waters of the Vitasta.

NILAMATA PURANAM

The great Goddess, the shining Sati, the real daughter of the Himalaya, gave her body to be that sacred Kashmir. Invulnerable it was to outsiders, with its blooming fields through which the Vitasta flowed like the parting of the flower-laden hair of a beautiful woman. The sound of the Vedas was always heard there, but no less, the sound of bow-strings. Magnificent it was both in Vedic learning and in Kshatriya power. And there was the sound of perpetual singing, dancing, and the playing of flutes, drums and vinas. All its people were literate. It was charming to visitors, with all fruits and flowers, resplendent with vines, deer, divine musicians. The *Budhas*, too, the Awakened were gay and happy there.

Lord of the Sapphire Radiance ![1]

In the distance Chandradeva saw the Lord of Nagas, as a cloud of blue collyrium, shining with a diadem gleaming like the sun. He wore a robe of lightning, an under robe of moonbeams, he sat beneath a canopy adorned on all the edges with a fringe of golden bells. His seven hundred haloes, striking awe in those who saw them, were encircled with the fire of flashing jewels.

Chandradeva saw him, and thought, "Truly, this is Nila, Guardian of Kashmir and Kashyapa's son ! "

The Brahman then approached him, walked around him in devotion, then fell upon the earth and sang this hymn :

Hail to you, O Lord of Nagas, Nila,
Blue, O Nila, like the lotus flower,
Like the dark blue masses of the rain clouds,
Blue, O Nila, dweller in the waters !
Seven hundred haloes give you glory,
Shining in an aura like the sunlight,
Glowing in the radiance of sapphires,
Visible to few, O Lord of Nagas !
King of those who know divine enjoyment,
Gifted with the transcendental powers,
Knowing sages meditate upon you.
Brahmans understanding of the Vedas,
Active in fulfilment of their duties,
Seeking in the world, and through their actions
Fruit of active sacrifice adore you.
Nila, who thus seated, as a Yogi,
Seem to me to be the Lord of Yoga,

[1] Chandradeva's Hymn to Nila Naga. *Nilamata Puranam, op. cit.* Sanskrit text pp. 35-7. Translated in collaboration with Pandit Jagaddhar Zadoo.

Lord of Nagas, in the light of sapphires,
Gods regard you as the sun in heaven,
Nila, spirit of the blue effulgence,
You it is who bring us to perfection !

Thrown I am beneath the earth and see you,
Chance it was. I meditate upon you !
Grant me freedom from my great afflictions,
Guard me, Lord, accept my salutation !
Nila, blue like waters of the ocean,
Shining Vishnu, Lord of Gods, completer,
You who are creator and enjoyer,
You are Vishnu and I bow before you !
Even he whose senses are not mastered,
Concentrating all his thoughts upon you,
Liberation gains but through your favour,
Robed in blue, whose eyes are blue, O Nila,
Shining one pervading this whole ether !
Vedas know you as the One Eternal,
Singing of you as the great bestower,
Both to those who long for liberation
And to those who seek the world of pleasure.
God, the Pure, Unqualified One, ever
Manifests Himself through you, O Nila,
Who, yourself, your body bring to being,
Solid and yet subtle as the ether.
Rich you are and yet in need of riches,
Even *That* which is beyond destruction
Sings of you in songs of adoration.

Heat emerges from your effort, Nila,
Snow and water, gentle rains bestow us !
Proud of you, his son, is Lord Kashyapa,
Lord, Protector of all living beings.
Duty, truth, forbearance are within you,
Demons by the thousands you have routed,

Counteracting energy of demons,
Nila, who of greater powers are master.
Granting to your devotees compassion,
You yourself have followed Mahadeva.
Dearer than all other gods or nagas,
As Vasuki Naga, He has loved you.
Kuvera, the friend of Mahadeva,
Friend to you, no less, lends you his title,
Benefactor of the Nagas, Nila,
Devotee of yours I am forever !

Songs of A Queen of Kashmir

HABBA KHATUN

Lol of the Lonely Pine

The one who dazzles—have you seen that one ?
Upon him look !
A sleepless stream in search of him I run,
A restless brook.
In far off woods, a lonely pine I stood
Till he appeared,
My woodcutter, and came to cut the wood.
His fire I feared,
Yet though he burn my logs, behold, I shine,
My ashes wine !

Song of the Restless Stream

The world its Ramadan will end,
    The lover's Id,
The feast of love, O call him, friend !
    For love is Id.

But love has melted me like snow,
    A waterfall,
As restless as the summer streams
    I sleepless go !

O, call him gently, friend, O call !
    With wreaths and dreams
I carry wine to Dara's peaks,
    The world below.

And yet he roams in distant vales,
    New wine he seeks !
If he comes not, the jasmine pales,
    And I, and all !

Gather Violets, O Narcissus!

Rain has come, and fields and fruit trees sing,
Spring has come, and Love, the Lord of Spring,
Dandelions have lifted up their faces,
Cold has gone and every wintry thing !
Forget-me-not the forest graces,
Iris and the lily spring will bring.
  Gather violets, O narcissus,
Winter's ashes from our door I fling !
The water bird the lake embraces,
How can frost upon your petals cling ?

Never Return These Hours

Meadows I cover with flowers for you,
  Come, my lover of flowers !
Come, let me gather fresh jasmine for you,
  Never return these hours !
Lilacs have bloomed by the river for you,
  Deeply the world is asleep,
Still, though, no answer has reached me from you,
  Garlands of green I keep.
What if they speak only evil of me ?
Who has been able to change destiny ?
  Come, my lover of flowers !

The Golden Wine Cups of the Night

In henna I have dyed my hands,
When will he come ?
I die, while he roams distant lands,
My heart is numb !

O, where is now the day's delight ?
I've waited long.
The golden wine cups of the night
To him belong !

The ritual of love is sweet,
Could I adorn
My love with jewels, perfume his feet,
Be no more torn,

Anoint him with my fragrant kiss,
Love, for your sake,
The lotus of my heart in bliss
Would block the lake !

Lol of the Wild Yellow Rose

Wild, the vagrant yellow rose
Again has bloomed,
Beauty has in all that grows
Rare forms assumed !
Where, O love, your hiding place ?
I wander far,
Seeking you among the streams
The dew-drops pour.
Jasmine in the forest gleams,
But where your face ?
Violets bloom for me to trace
To where you are.

Habba Khatun

I left my home for play
    Nor yet again
Returned, although the day
    Sank in the West.
The name I made is hailed
    On lips of men,
Habba Khatun ! though veiled,
    I found no rest.
Through crowds I found my way,
    From forests, then,
The sages came, when day
    Sank in the West.

Kashmiri Folk Songs

Song of the Jhelum

Come to my Jhelum, shepherd,
To quench the thirst of your sheep,
Green grass with love's water,
Shepherd, for you I keep !

All my boats I'll illumine
For you when you bring your goats,
Come to my Jhelum, shepherd,
Brightly I'll light my boats.

Take me, O boatman, hear my call,
Here flows the River of Love,
For you I devote my all, my all,
Slow moving Jhelum of Love !

Here flows the River of Love,
O boatman, take me across to your shore !
My boat takes only the two in love,
The Jhelum will take no more.

Song of the Chenar Leaf

Chenar leaf, my love has sent you to me,
My all, O Prince of Beauty !
Chenar leaf, Prince of Beauty for me,
My all, O love, I will give you.

The banks of the Jhelum I light today,
All Kashmir I light with torches,
O, the bridegroom comes in a boat today
Gleaming with flower arches !

Far-off forests have flowered, my love, [1]
Have you not heard of me ?
Mountain lakes with flowers have filled,
Has no bird sung of me ?

Come, we will go to the meadows of dreams,
Where the lilac flowers have blossomed,
I will search for you by the rose-covered streams,
Has no stream told you of me ?

The bridegroom has come in a golden boat,
Like a lotus bud I will greet you !
The narcissus eyes play hide and seek,
Will you not come and meet me ?

[1] Lines also attributed to Habba Khatun.

Saffron Flower

The saffron flowers are blooming, love, in Pampur
    they fill all space,
Flower that plunders away my heart, my heart-beat,
    ah, the saffron !
Who has given colour to you and fragrance, O
    saffron flower ?
Like a burning lamp on a moonlit night,
O saffron that I would hold to myself in a sweet
    embrace !
Like gold you are gleaming, O saffron flower,
To you I devote my all !

My love flew away to Pampur,
The saffron flowers captured him and held him in
    sweet embrace.
O, he is there, and I am here,
When, O God, will I be able ever to see his face ?

The Tale of the Reed Flute[1]

Only to him who suffers pain can pain be manifest,
The reed flute herself is telling the pain of the flute.
Praise be to Him Who created Muhammed, the Beloved Guest!
The Almighty is One only, says the flute.
The Almighty is pure, He of His own will free from anger,
Only to Himself can He be yearning, says the flute,
Night and day, unto Himself the friend and stranger,
Who gave four wondrous friends unto Muhammed, says the flute,
Who Adam, and through him, the world created.
Adam went forth destitute. A wish! And from his side
Came Eve to him. How beautiful the moment they were mated,
Says the flute, that the world abide!

If you yourself have suffered, says the flute, then stay beside me,
Beautiful with branches I grew behind the wood,
With lovely leaves I stood upright, nor knew what would
betide me,
Waving my golden pendants, in what beauty and youth I stood!

But there fell on me a woodcutter, a doom, a thief of fate,
The flute is saying: Rage impelled the axe that gave that blow!
My flesh he crushed to splinters, hear my tale, I beg you, wait!
My pride in my great beauty with that axe he turned to woe.
She went apart from the forest, and of that parting she tells,
Lamenting she was, and weeping as she made her last farewells.
When he brought me down from the forest, to a
carpenter I was sold,
He melted me with a saw, and a knife fell on me, behold!
What humiliation he cast on me only the reed flute knows.

[1] Based upon Kashmiri text from *Hatim's Tales*, Aurel Stein collection with English prose translation.

The flute is saying, where have my friends remained?
I would have given them messages, O, have they remained half way?
I would have told them my secret, of how my flesh has been pained,
The flute is saying: I cry for help, I open my breast, I pray!
In the gatherings of men and women
I would cry out to tell of my pains,
I would tell them of what has befallen me,
Nor woman nor man without fated sorrow remains.
The Teacher says:
Memory came of her own forest when for cheap piece she was sold,
To this forest she is saying something. What is it she would have told?
The flute is saying: There is longing in me for my forest,
For that I searched heaven and earth!
Will an ignorant person, hearing of it, know the meaning of my forest?
Will an untaught person, hearing of it, know my forest's worth?
He only will have knowledge of my forest
Who has arrived at Him-Who-Has-No-Abode,
The flute is saying: What has been said in the rhymed poem?
He alone will know on whom has fallen a particle of love!
The flute is saying:
Sweet wine how many are drinking, how many eat ripened fruit!
In Sodarbal only, Suban tells the tale of the flute.

O, Men and Birds!

Song of the Sindh Valley Porters[1]

O, porters, it is time to be starting,
The wind of the dawn blows cold and the stars are still in the sky,
But the journey before us is long, the loads are heavy,
And the path climbs high,
O porters, it is time to be starting !
Let us sing as we go, for the birds are singing,
They, too, have their time,
At the end of our stage, with the songs we're bringing,
Food will be a joy.
Men and birds, it is time to be starting, O porters, it is starting time !
Our life on earth is going, coming,
No place may we stay for long,
Rajas even come and go,
Arise, let us march to our song !
No good it is to stay behind in one's own abode,
The heart of a man is his only home,
And he who goes out from his own heart may, perhaps, find God along the road.
O, porters, it is time to be starting,
O, men and birds, arise !

[1] Based upon version in *Kashmiri Lyrics*, Jia Lal Kaul, Introduction.

Ballad of the Honey Bee[1]

The Teacher says:

This farmer's wife had fled. And why?
The overseer and the headman of the village had shown her tyranny,
That is why she had fled. She went away to a forest,
And a honey bee found her there. Speech came to the honey bee and it said,
"Why have you fled?"
"Because of tyranny I lament! Hear my tale, O friend!"

The honey bee said to the farmer's wife:
"Our cries unto Him let us send!
Let us cry unto Him and fall at His feet,
Thy winged one of the wood!
From the mountains I brought down a river of sweet,
To that bear may there come no good!
He destroyed the nest of my little ones,
O, God, dids't Thou feel no pity?
Lo, I am Thy honey bee, Thy winged one of the wood!"

The honey bee said to the farmer's wife:
"Refuge I took in a farmer's house. What that farmer did to me, hear!
He fashioned a beautiful dwelling for me,
The walls made lovely with butter,
It became a prison of death for me and my fate was humiliation.
With a sickle he cut off my honey combs,
O, the guilt of how many murders!
Lo, I am Thy honey bee, telling her tribulation."
The honey bee finished, having spoken her pain.

[1] Based on text from *Hatim's Tales*, *op. cit.*

Then she said to the farmer's wife :
"If anything, too, has befallen you,
Speak to me, tell me your sorrow,
Singing we are on the one day,
Weeping upon the morrow !"
The farmer's wife said to the honey bee :
"Hear the tyranny shown me, pray,
Lo, I am Thy farmer's wife, we have not come here to stay !
When the fruits I sowed in mother earth ripened, I harvested them,
I piled them onto the threshing floor, to what weight, who can say ?
In the village circuit the village headman and accountant to weigh them came,
Lo, I am Thy farmer's wife, we have not come here to stay !
The poor and hungry, how many, O friend, holding out the apron came,
Lo, I am Thy farmer's wife, we have not come here to stay !
The skirts were filled to the full by me, is that not salvation's way ?
Lo, I am Thy farmer's wife, we have not come here to stay !"

Ladakhi Folk Songs

Song Accompanying the Dance of the Opening Bud

A path I know that leads into the heights
Beneath the snow that in the daylight gleams,
And shepherds breathe the perfume of the nights
And flowers drink their life from laughing streams.
There lives the Spirit of the Mountain Pass,
Who once upon a time had been a prince,
And now there grows the sweetest, greenest grass,
And on the grass he leaves his sacred prints.
A path I know that to the river leads,
And sweet enchantment to the singer gives,
Where pebbles shine like scattered silver seeds,
And there no spirit, but a princess lives,
So small, so precious ! She all wisdom knows,
And there is music, but no green grass grows.

Song of the Flute

"The maiden's blush is like the valley rose,
Her eyes, the dew I saw but yesterday,
I call her with the music of my flute
But fear she will not hear the song I play !"

"Not so, O love, my heart tonight will burst !
The mists have gathered up the lovely sound,
The hills have drunk it with an eager thirst,
And I but hear the flute so far away ! "

Lols of Arnimal

Song of the Blossoming Orchard

Did the apple tree bloom from your caress,
  Can I tell you, love, can I tell you ?
Did the cherry tree wear a flaming dress,
  Can I tell you, love, can I tell you ?
Did the apricot tree my secret guess,
  Did it lose its leaves, can I tell you ?
Did the plum tree wither for my distress
  And a blight fall, love, can I tell you ?
When the peach tree blossoms will spring possess
  All its last year's glow, can I tell you ?

Almond Blossom Song

The spring is here in emerald waves,
  Our friends are late,
The iris blooms on far-off graves,
  They sleep, we wait !

O, almond blossoms everywhere,
  My love has gone !
I laid out flower beds for love
  Alone, at dawn,
My daffodils have withered there,
  O dream, be gone !

The hillsides once again in flower,
  The blossoms here,
I heard the whisper of a crow :
  "The spring is near,
And yet your love has fled from you
  In beauty's hour !"

The latticed balcony of being
  Has ivory eaves,
A turtle dove, her lover wooing,
  A love nest weaves.
What am I worth before the doves
  If my love leaves ?

O, once again the almonds blooming,
  He roams the wood !
And me, the lightning struck, consuming
  My youth, my blood !
Where I had been a lone dove building

A carefree nest,
A strand of his dark hair submerged me
Beneath the flood.

My youth in vain I gave away,
The almond bud,
To distant woods he went to stay,
How tall he stood !
And I a bride who bathed that day
In oil of sandalwood.

O, Dawn !

Before the dawn of roses passed
  I said my prayers,
The feast is come, I kept the fast,
  Why, then, these tears ?

When feasts are here, where would you roam ?
  With love endowed
Before I left my father's home
  My life I vowed.

For love of you I left my own,
  I tore the veil,
The jasmine of our court has grown
  To what avail ?

O, vigil of my heart, I pray,
  O rose, O dawn,
May he return a single day
  And then be gone !

Spinning Song

Jasmine, His Fragrance Keep!

Silence, my wheel, be silent!
  Fragrant the oil, I anoint you,
If you had thought we'd bloom again,
  Jasmine, I disappoint you.

Raise up your head, O hyacinth,
  Out of the mud and sands,
I, your narcissus, wait for you,
  Wine cups are in my hands!

Silence, my wheel, be silent,
  Should I lay bare my heart,
I, too, would fall, an autumn leaf,
  Branches and summer part.

Silence, my wheel, be silent,
  Jasmine, his fragrance keep!
Charm on your arm, I cling to you,
  Jasmine, but give me sleep!

O, Rose !

Jasmine flowers formed my face,
  The virgin snows,
Love is gone and I have turned
  A yellow rose.[1]

Jars and jars I filled of wine,
  O, drink to me !
Bewitched he is with loveliness
  No longer mine.

Arise and seek for him at dawn
  On hills and heights,
The dawn of life and he is gone,
  O, weep, delights !

Bazaars of love, and yet he fled
  The crowded joys,
He left for me the winter winds
  Of Sindh to wed.

A hundred homes know him as guest,
  His hair, the night,
His face the dawn, as he pursues
  His thirsty quest.

Had maidens died, though flowers fade,
  Who then had cared
For men in pride of youth, O rose,
  Be not afraid !

[1] Pun on the name of Arnimal, "Yellow Rose."

Arrows aimed by him of love
  At flower breasts
Have pained, for never, dawn or night,
  O, rose, love rests !

Take Back the Wine and Candle-light

I wandered the world to seek for you,
  You were not found,
I tuned my heart-strings to speak to you,
  Did they not sound ?
Majnun was ready, for Laila's sake
  To roam the sands,
Your Laila has come bedecked to you
  With hennaed hands.

Why was the creeper trampled by you,
  The flowering vine ?
I heard a tap at the window pane,
  The bridegroom calls !
But it was not he, and I remain.
  Take back the wine
And candle-light from the waiting halls !

But Flower, Jasmine Mine !

My mountain jasmine gleams,
  I fill the cups with wine,
A deer, he sprang away from me,
  Around me, jasmine, twine !

My dove upon the streams,
  In childhood you were mine,
Will you not play today with me
  By this sweet jasmine vine ?

O, love of childhood dreams,
  But flower, jasmine mine !
Have you no word to say to me
  At water lily time ?

The Krishna Lila of Kashmir

The Secret Word

S A'D I, *quoted by* P A R A M A N A N D A

And you, O bird of dawn, of love may learn!
The moth is silent, though it die and burn,
And he who secrets sought the other side
Will tell no word should he with word return.

The Moth the Lesson Never Learns

PARAMANANDA[1]

Like spirits of the other world, we too
Will join the ring and dance the seasons through !

We worship Him with buds of our own spring,
To waken Him within us from His sleep,
To whom but Him our adoration bring ?

These maidens who their love upon Him heap
Have locked Him in love's rapturous embrace,
They bathe, refreshed, within that ocean deep.

How, barefoot, in the woods they sought the place
Beloved Krishna in the circle turns,
Hot stones beneath their feet, to see His face.

The moth around the candle wheels and burns,
And thus around their joyous love they whirl.
Behold ! The moth the lesson never learns,

Their tears have put to shame the treasured pearl.
How hard it is to tell the secret word !
The moth its life into the flame will hurl.

And who has known the highest bliss ? None stirred
To tell it, having known it. Naught is heard.

[1]Translations of Paramananda in collaboration with Masterji Zinda Kaul.

Where Love Becomes An Ocean

PARAMANANDA

Yes, to the circle dance and drunk with wine
Ecstatic thousands come to love and play,
Their interlocking arms a laden vine,
Their call to Radha, Radhakrishnaji!

Their doubts of ages cleared within a day,
Narada, Sudama and Dhruva came,
Confusion gone before the rapturous way,
They call on Radha, Radhakrishnaji!

How paradise remained an empty name
When heaven came to earth, a blissful dream,
And Brindaban stole Indra's heaven's fame
And freedom came from Radhakrishnaji!

The dance is love's expanse become an ocean,
The dance is where there is no trace of sin,
The equipoise of sour and sweet, devotion
To Radha, Radha, Radhakrishnaji!

The trees and plants and even stones their eyes
Have opened, for they lost in sleep had been,
And now they bare the secrets of their loves, disguise
Cast off for Radha, Radhakrishnaji!

Radha Svayamvara

PARAMANANDA

They know no more themselves,their senses flown,
Who, maddened by Thy flute to search and find
Thee, seek in all the world for Thee alone.
These Gopi girls are movements of my mind,
O light of life ! Who in the joyous dance,
Caught hand in hand with Thee, their hearts entwined
With Thine, upon the truth of ages glance.

O, Thou, Who though appearing as the sky
Art truth's eternal light, immortal guest
To each, as he to picture Thee would try,
Could we but place the jewel upon Thy breast !
The smiling flowers which bloom upon Thy face
What fever would not cool and put to rest ?
The God upon the Waters I embrace !

Within the body, yet Thou art apart,
The shadow could not be without the sun.
Of mystic invocations, Thou the heart,
And Thou the fruit the sacrifice has won.
The sages stand, enthralled to see the Lord
Returned as Radha-Krishna, grief undone,
The deathless water He upon us poured !

The righteous with their penances and pride
Aspired to Thee, repeating with precision
Their formulas. In formulas they vied,
But at the end of life, still in division,
Desired more life for unresolved disputes.

Eternity, had they but sought Thy vision
Was theirs, the deathless joy which doubts refutes.

O, night and day Paramananda longs
For Thee, in every forest glade he seeks
For Thee, O God of Beauty, he belongs
To Thee ! Of Thee alone he sings and speaks.

And now to tell of Radha I desire !
The vision of the beautiful is yours
If you but light the lamp of inner fire.
In every birth the God of Beauty hers !
When she is born, her lips repeat His name,
The great physician, who all suffering cures,
The flowering of an ancient love, He came.

Their ancient vows again had borne them fruit,
For none of us can reap but what we sow.
An ancient promise given was the root
Of all this forest faith had made to grow.
His dark blue beauty how could she forget ?
Whatever comes, is what we earn or owe,
Before the world began, these two had met.

In every birth to Thee is Radha wedded,
In every part Thou playds't upon the stage,
As lotus roots beneath the lake embedded,
Her love blooms forth again in every age.
Amazed to see again the ancient play,
Narada stands, the everliving sage,
Remembering the stage of yesterday.

Delusion fills the darkness of the mind.
They know not Radha. One to know is rare !
How can they understand her who are blind ?

Pervader of the Universe ! or dare
To know that she who is the Ocean's daughter
Has taken birth, yet once again to find
Herself among us in our tears and laughter ?

O, can a cowherd girl be really she ?
Narada never saw the sun so bright !
He said, "How can I say who she may be ? "
The sun came every dawn, the Lord of Light,
With flowers of adoration filled the skies,
And gazed on her to purify his sight,
For lotuses of worship, gave his eyes.

Narada, who had known her in the past,
Upon the stars, and then on Radha gazed,
And when the cowgirl's horoscope was cast,
He rubbed his eyes, and looked upon her, dazed,
And listened to her voice, a bird in song,
And saw her dance,where calves around her grazed,
Since he had last seen that bright face, how long ?

Too sacred for the pages of a book,
Musicians of the skies of Radha sing,
The elements in rapture on her look,
How can Narada utter such a thing ?
The Gopis dance, and maddened with love's wine
Make all the forest with their voices ring,
And with their berry lips the forests shine.

And Radha blossomed like the jasmine blown
Upon the hilltops in the early dawn.
The calves stopped grazing, how could they have known,
Or how could antelope, or deer, or faun
Have guessed the Lord Himself had played the flute ?
Whoever heard the flute, his senses gone,
First laughed, then wept, and then his tongue turned mute.

They laughed and wept and in the forest joyed,
And no disturbance interrupts their play.
These actors in their rapture unalloyed
Could not see Radha hide herself away.
To have their wits about them it was rare,
These games divine they witnessed every day,
And lost and found again the blissful pair.

Yet mothers listened not. "A childish tale!"
They said when daughters told them of their sport,
As travellers, when the goal is distant, fail
By turning back again to whence they start.
They failed to guess the truth of this sweet game,
And hearing of the drama of the heart
Their daughters disbelieved and heaped with blame.

The Lord, Shri Krishna, with His calves appeared,
And there they met, like guests upon the way,
Quite unexpectedly, when Radha neared.
Could I have been by both of them that day
To bring the light again back to my eyes!
Where, though they met and stood as strangers may,
Remembered all, nor failed to recognise.

The sage, Narada, at a distance stayed.
O, who can count His countless devotees?
Narada wondered, and the vina played.
No one is born who really knows or sees.
How many in a vain attempt have flung
Their lives away? The secret has no keys,
Paramananda speaks but with his tongue.

What else could love have breathed upon his breath
To tell of how whoever saw that face
Went far beyond the cares of birth and death?
In calves and cowherd girls and boys no trace

Remained of what enslaves and burdens men.
The Lord Who is beyond both time and space
Narada, who had seen, now saw again.

The cowherd girls and boys in thousands played,
Nor calves nor cows in need of tether stood,
All cares and doubts and fears behind them stayed,
The trees and blooming plants and all the wood
But sang of Radha's love and Krishna's praise.
I'd tell what song that was if tell I could,
Or how the calves and cowherds passed the days.

What is the world ? unknown unto the blind
Who knowledge of the self do not possess.
The tyrant Kansa represents the mind,
The Gokul of the heart will Krishna bless
When He, the self, within Mathura dwells,
And you are right should you Mathura guess
To be the body ! This, the secret tells.

One day the Lord with Radha disappeared,
The Gopis knew not by what path or way.
Of Radhika, above all else endeared
To them, He had deprived them in His play !
Bewildered, they began to seek His face
In all the ten directions, night and day
They searched for Him Who is beyond all space.

And while the Lord enjoyed His magic play,
The Gopis traced the prints of Radha's feet,
And guided by the flute from far away
Went asking shadows, "Did you Radha meet ?"
Distracted, from afar, they hear the call.
The dust beneath them could I be ! How sweet
To drink the tears that from their lashes fall.

Then Radha they found weeping by the way,
For she had lost Him Whom she thought she found,
And knew no words for what she wished to say.
"He bent," she said, "to lift me from the ground,
My feet were tired, we had walked for long.
My heart rejoiced, 'He Whom I love is bound!
His heart and love belong to me alone!'

"And then I knew how haughty I had been,
For suddenly He left, I know not where,
Too late I saw that pride had been my sin,
And now upon the willow seek the pear!"
From wood to wood they wandered, singing songs
Of Krishna, with dishevelled hair,
"O, where is He to Whom our life belongs?"

"You hear the flute? O, surely you can hear!"
They asked, "Good people, where can Krishna be?
He plays the flute! The sound of it is near!
The flower bush are we and He the bee!
O, He Whom in a lifetime no one finds,
Black bee, magician, juggler, beauty, He!
As bees the flowers plunder, He our minds!"

"Of sacred scriptures nothing do we know,
Nor Vedas nor Puranas do we hear,
Estranged from all the world by love we go,
A world unreal, though real it may appear!
For Krishna only may it substance lend,"
Paramananda, you who hold Him dear
Will win! For love of Him wins in the end.

Beloved cowherd, sound again Thy flute!
O Merciful, enchanter, royal swan!
And by Thy music all our sins uproot!

Where shall I seek Thee now, where art Thou gone?
I seek from wood to wood, so often blind,
O, leave me not again, O dancing faun !
In Thee alone the world its peace can find.

When they had spoken thus, He, dancing came,
And rapture overcame them at the sight,
As though He had been standing there, the same,
And had not left at all. In their delight
Nor yesterday remembered they, nor tears,
And life was new with every morning's light,
While dawns and days and sunsets turned to years.

If only love intense enough can be,
God is revealed in every little thing,
And through illusion's eyes we no more see.
O, for this perfect joy I long and sing !
Because they loved that bliss to them belongs,
Paramananda, to their love I cling !
But for that bliss Paramananda longs.

The Gopis saw the all-pervading bliss,
Unlike ascetics, meditating long,
Who leave all joys and yet the vision miss,
Their dry lips parched proclaiming right and wrong,
They ask release, and yet with chains are bound
While cowherd girls rise on the wings of song !
Paramananda, seek the bliss they found.

O, day and night even the Trinity
Will seek and find Him not ! Nor realise
Him as He is, the pure divinity
Of consciousness, to which the mind can rise
But if it know that it with all is one.
Yes, leave the separate self, to recognise
Him there, with each and all, as is the sun.

In ignorance and learning, what the gain?
The Gopis sought and found Him. As at first
He smiled again upon them, and a rain
Of nectar poured upon their hearts and thirst.
Yea, father, mother, self they left behind,
The bonds of tribe and family ties they burst,
Surrendered all, Him Whom they loved to find.

Their veils with saffron and with camphor scent
They perfumed, and with flowers decked their dress,
And yet no veils obscured them as they went
In joy and bliss. Would you the secret guess,
Then hear the Bhagavata: Yea, for Hind,
The God of Hind the devotee will bless,
The God of Sindh is answerer of Sindh.[1]

Of universal vision, He, the goal!
Though no one knows Him fully, all believe,
And none can reach the vision of the Whole
But those who, as the Gopis, all else leave.
No picture but of Him dwells in their eyes,
Nor paradise nor powers would they achieve,
Nor Yoga, nor a ship to sail the skies.

And there they played upon the Jumna's sands,
Forgot their homes, and danced within the wood.
The sands would boast when tossed within their hands
That pearls would change to sand if but they could.
The place of ritual debts their laughter fills,
Nor idols made of stone they understood,
In place of idols they adored the hills.

[1] *Mathnawi*, Jalalu'd-din Rumi, II: 1757, Persian text, Nicholson.

At dawn the Gopis gathered at His door.
"Awaken ! It is dawn, the world is light,
O, dark blue, beautiful one, sleep no more ! "
These boys and girls could neither read nor write,
And fell upon the ground in joy and mirth,
The Veda, though, of love, they could recite !
The angels heard, and wished to fall to earth.

"Awaken ! " And before His door they stood,
"Come, let us take the cows and calves along !"
And then they heard Him coming in the wood.
For many births the seers and sages long
But for a moment on His face to glance,
And now they heard Him join the cowherds' song,
And saw Him join the cowherds in the dance.

O, God of Beauty, do our love fulfil !
Beloved, dark blue, beautiful one, hear !
O, we are Sita, Thou art Rama, kill
The tyrant Kamsa ! Thee all tyrants fear.
The life you take from them, O may you give
To those who Thee alone, O Lord, hold dear,
O Vishnu ! Lord in Whom alone we live !

And reverence to Shukadeva, he
Who worshipped Krishna as though ever there
Before him ! Radha he could only see
As merged in Krishna, as the wind in air,
Inseparable ! Apart, he knows her not,
And both in Shukadeva's worship share.
The wise as part of Krishna Radha sought.

They asked her mother, "Why does Radha roam
The woods with Krishna? Surely you should chide
A daughter who abandoning her home
Goes off with Krishna to the woods to hide !"

The gossips Radha's mother filled with shame,
To grieve her with their tales her neighbours tried,
But Radha said, "O, Mother, where the blame ? "

"No one of us with anybody plays,
We see the Lord each one of us become,
To cowherd boys and girls, as sun to rays,
The Lord is changed. Of numbers, He the sum ! "
And as they spoke, there came a lovely sound.
Again, He played the flute ! Her mother, dumb
With rapture, love's great liberation found.

And there they saw Lord Krishna, all alone.
The world which sprang from Him, as day from night,
Like petals from a stem the wind has blown
Had gone. The moth itself can never light
The candle ! It is drawn, and death will dare.
Whoso receives its mandate, in delight
Will seek the flame and for naught else will care.

The more they see the less they understand
Of Krishna. Yea, illusion has such power
It hides the sun beneath the shadow's hand.
The one they love is with them for an hour,
He hides and leaves them and they trip and fall,
Their red lips like the Braja forest flower,
"Arise ! Arise !" to one another call.

All seek Him, yet none find Him but the few
Who to their separate selves strive not to cling,
And by renouncing self, find self anew.
From what is sacrificed, the new will spring.
Beyond the ten directions, Yoga, mind,
Beyond what senses or what books may bring,
Alone, they who surrender, Krishna find.

Surrendered, as though drunk with honey wine,
The cowherd boys and girls leave not their quest.
"Upon us in Thy dark blue beauty shine!
O, Thou, Who on the ageless Waters rest,
O peace, bliss, Shiva, we seek Thee alone!
O, Thou Who with the universe art dressed,
Thy spirit, then, within life's jewels had shone.

Yea, even seers who saw yet could not see,
O source of seven oceans, by Thy grace
Have those been ferried who have crossed the sea,
O Thou Who art beyond both time and space,
We seek Thee north and south and east and west!
We weep, our eyes beneath Thy feet we place,
The sun has set, and night our only guest.

Paramananda says that unfulfilled
Remained in all who went upon their way
The wish to know the Lord, their pain unstilled.
In saying so, he nothing strange would say.
And yet the sheet of ice which forms a veil
Is melted when the sunrise brings the day,
And he will win whose heart refused to fail.

But Why Renounce the World?

Krishna Razdan

O, come, and let the dance be our delight,
For when the Gopis' Lord began to dance
Six months had passed as though a single night!
The seasons watched enraptured. In their trance,
A month flew as an hour, a year a day,
A thousand eras we will dance away!

We know the way to Him, our spirit soars,
How blessed the days of youth, do not delay!
Leave open all the windows and the doors,
Our children, weaned and sleeping, stay behind.
What use of riches if God's love we find?

Who suffered for the Plunderer-of-Hearts?
For they who suffer not remain as blind.
You suffer not as we when He departs,
How can you, then, know Nandalal, the sweet
Of pain, or serve the Rapture-Giver's feet?

But why should we renounce the lovely world?
Shall we not go bedecked the Lord to meet?
Our simple words are weighty mantrams hurled,
Our banqueting and drink a holy fast,
Our laughter, meditation on the past.

Our love of Him is our austerity,
Our dance on nymphs of heaven shame has cast,
Our songs of Him end bleak severity,

Such bliss as His all grief and sorrow kills
And those in paradise with envy fills.

Beyond illusion, yet a form He wears,
Lord of Yoga, yet in enjoyment thrills,
Enjoying all, yet free from action's snares,
A voice from here, a song, a call from there,
He, hand in hand with all, is everywhere !

Night passes into day and day to night,
All speak of Him, all voices are a prayer.
Amid the many worlds, where, this delight ?
The evening dances with the dawn sublime,
And thus do we devour devouring time.

The Holy Gita, Life

SONGS OF ZINDA KAUL

That Moth, Mansur

MASTERJI ZINDA KAUL[1]

The wanderer in the world, this heart aflame
Had closed its eyes one day to dream alone.
A wind, as from an origin unknown,
To lift away the restless wanderer came,
To where, beyond the scorching, treeless plains,
Chenar trees shelter slumber in the shade,
Or he who had the downward journey made
The ice-cool water of the Sindh regains,
Or where a Gopi girl of Braj returns
To join the dance again and joy relearns.

Of God the heart hears many different things,
Yet saw within that garden only man,
The formless come to name and form, the One
The farthest journey to the pilgrim brings.
Whatever wood or cross it be contain
The very heat and flame which burned that moth
Mansur, who that "I AM" is God the Truth
Had fearlessly proclaimed, nor died in vain !
But useless are the eyes of flesh to know
The secrets which the moth's destruction show.

The wanderer, in that journey, saw the will
To be the garden in the meanest thorn,

[1] Based upon selections from *Smaran, The Rosary as a Token of Love and other Kashmiri poems* with explanatory translation in English by Zinda Kaul, 2 Vols. Srinagar, 1951.
1956 Sahitya Academy Award.

And that the buds which had not yet been born
Into the world of flowers colours fill.

Yes, God in the beginning chose to dwell
In love, but love had built a house of tears.
I know a lovely heart, which though the years
Are few upon the form it wears, yet tell
Of fasts and sacrifice, as though the snow
On hills of June, her hyacinth of hair
Has whitened leaves. The market does not care
To search for desert diamonds, nor can know
The music which within the sitar sings
In silence when its passion breaks the strings.

The wine cup of the tulip petals fades,
The scar of love is fresher when they fall,
The sacred stone to which love's vision leads
Is set in Mecca's ancient, crumbling wall!

Hymn to Love

Great Love, thy power is as God's to bring
The dead to life ! I know no God but thee,
But make my heart thy shrine, and I will sing
Of thee and worship thee, thy herald be !

With essences of beauty, all I see
Of form and colour, sounds I hear, and songs,
I fill thy cups, the gift from me to thee,
To whom alone the beautiful belongs.

Alas, how I have left the open air
To dig me pits in earth and build me walls !
Without thy help, O love, can I repair
These ditches, or tear down these lonely halls ?

A moth I am, and thou the flame, to leave
This caterpillar garment is my dream !
A death inglorious it would be to live
A worm, but life to die within thy flame.

The water is the same in every stream,
Impurities it gathers from the banks,
The priests and books and differences of name.
Thy law was simple : love and offer thanks !

So may I drink but from the source alone,
O, source of light and of myself ! And shine
In all these scattered atoms from the One,
And make them one again, and make them mine.

The Holy Song of Life

The New Year once again,[1] the flowers here,
The gardens singing with the voice of birds
Their joyous odes to greet the new-born year !
O, by the tulip's window, what the words
The blue bell whispers ? As Lord Krishna spoke
By windows of the Gopis. Sleepy eyes
Narcissus flowers opened, worms awoke
In bright, celestial robes as butterflies.

Unto a votive cup of love, the bee
The flowers summon, as the Gopis said,
"Where can the dark-blue beautiful one be ?"
In greater pomp and glory now is led
The coronation pageant of the King
Than daffodils, the heralds, had proclaimed,
Or lilies, trumpet bearers of the spring,
For in this birthday feast his sons are named.

Fresh water from the mountains pours in streams
To bathe the sons of spring, and at the Fair
Of almond blossoms, as a voice in dreams
The buried saints still murmur their soft prayer.[2]
Is seer or seen more beautiful ? The eyes
Of seers reflect the almond blossoms, bees
As though with *santur* music fill the skies,
The sound of songs and samovars the breeze.

[1] Nuruz, the Spring equinox, celebrated by Hindus and Muslims among the almond blossoms of the "Devagiri" hill above Srinagar.
[2] Sheikh Hamza Makhdum is buried on the sacred hill.

O, come, my comrades, and enjoy the spring !
This New Year Day a fresh wine let us drink,
And every hatred and unpleasant thing
Forget, and kind thoughts may we think,
And words and deeds be gracious. Be we friends
Again, and leave behind us last year's strife.
The New Year Festival this message sends :
A new leaf in the Holy Gita, life !

My Lover from Eternity Awaits

He sent me here and said, "Within this land
And house and in this flower garden live
And wait for me, and from the garden give
The flowers to neighbours ! This is how to send
Them all to me, nor for your giving grieve,

For when you water any plant on earth,
Behold ! The water all the earth receives.
Whoever loves, whatever he believes,
Whomever he may love, the Lord is both
The love in him and what his love achieves."

He sends me letters now and then, addressed
In many different envelopes, a sky
Of stars, a lotus lake, a butterfly,
A woman or a man with beauty blessed,
A pair of dancing fauns, a night bird's cry,

A flowering meadow or a daffodil,
Narcissus blossoms, or a nightingale,
A stream like Ahrabal, a waterfall,
The truly wise who false desires kill
And owning nothing, by their love own all.

One night there came with the late rising moon
A sweeter music from the songs of space,
A flower fragrance filled my dwelling place,
The starling spoke, the breeze before the dawn
Came, pollen laden petals to embrace.

So beautiful the perfumed air became,
So musical the mingling of the stream
With melodies of bulbuls in a dream,
I asked, had my eternal lover come ?

The things which were for gifts by His command
I still possessed, nor did His order heed.
The flowers for neighbours I allowed to fade,
A store-room, in the prayer-room I had planned,
Was filled with dust and things I did not need.

Where, in that dusty store-room make a throne?
No holy place remained to make a seat,
And so He waits, and for a day to meet
In love like His which cares for love alone
My lover from eternity will wait.

The New Snow

The snow, the snow, the purifying snow !
As though a shroud were woven from the moon
To bury inequalities and drown
The hills and valleys, high and low.
Both fair and ugly beauty now possess
Beneath this level cover, come to show
That hills and plains are sections of one dress
If we the wearer of the dress could know.
The stranger, kinsman, birth and death, one grace
Pervades, if but duality could go !
The snow has fallen, beautiful and fresh,
My candle in the dawn will no more glow !
To see my image in the frozen bush
Will He, my Yogi, look beneath the snow ?

